

ASPIRATIONS OF NATURE.

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ASPIRATIONS OF NATURE.

BY

1702
I. T. HECKER,

c
AUTHOR OF "QUESTIONS OF THE SOUL."

4442

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
I.—THE DAWN,	9
II.—THE REALITY,	15
III.—LOYALTY,	21
IV.—CHOOSING THE WAY,	26
V.—“MAN,”	31
VI.—“RELIGION,”	35
VII.—“CHURCH,”	40
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="font-size: 3em; margin-right: 10px;">}</div> <div style="text-align: center;"> CONFESSIONS OF AN EARNEST SEEKER. </div> <div style="font-size: 3em; margin-left: 10px;">{</div> </div>	
VIII.—THE SEARCH,	44
IX.—HEATHEN PHILOSOPHY,	49
X.—GERMAN PHILOSOPHY,	58
XI.—FRENCH PHILOSOPHY,	68
XII.—ASPIRATIONS OF REASON,	76
XIII.—ADMISSIONS,	84
XIV.—TESTIMONY,	93
XV.—AGREEMENT,	99
XVI.—WHITHER?	108

	PAGE
XVII.—REASON,	115
XVIII.—FREE-WILL,	128
XIX.—HUMAN NATURE,	141
XX.—JUSTIFICATION,	152
XXI.—SECTARIANISM,	162
XXII.—THE RESULTS,	174
XXIII.—REASON,	193
XXIV.—CONTINUATION,	207
XXV.—FREE-WILL,	219
XXVI.—HUMAN NATURE,	226
XXVII.—CONTINUATION,	238
XXVIII.—JUSTIFICATION,	250
XXIX.—INDIVIDUALITY,	262
XXX.—UNIVERSALITY,	279
XXXI.—CHURCH,	292
XXXII.—AUTHORITY,	297
XXXIII.—APPLIANCES,	312
XXXIV.—FELLOWSHIP,	329
XXXV.—MEMORIALS,	344
XXXVI.—CONCLUSION,	358

PREFACE.

THIS book claims the attention of a large body of our intelligent countrymen.

Many of them are born and brought up without any definite religious belief ; and no sooner are the religious aspirations of the soul awakened ; than they go forth to seek a religion which, while it answers and supports these, does not gainsay the dictates of Reason.

Others receive early religious instructions, and, as soon as the eye of Reason opens, they find that many of the doctrines taught them in their childhood and youth, violate its plainest dictates, and shock the clearest convictions of conscience.

Loyal to Reason, they repudiate these false tenets, and endeavor to find or construct a religion agreeable to the laws of man's intelligence, and commensurate with all the wants of Human Nature.

Another class have discarded all denominable religions, and betake themselves to the different movements of the day in hopes of obtaining the solutions of the dark enigmas of life, and of finding the satisfaction which their religious instincts demand.

The following pages are addressed to these men. Let them be read in the spirit in which they were written, in earnestness, in sincerity, and in unswerving loyalty to Truth.

4442

THE ASPIRATIONS OF NATURE.



I.

The Dawn.

"How beautiful that yesterday, that stood
Over us like a rainbow! I am alone.
The past is past." A. SMITH.

THE first sensations of the happiness of our being, consist in the pleasure to look upon, and enjoy the exquisite charms which nature spreads with a lavish hand every where, to attract and win our attention.

The flowers, the sea, the air, the sky, the whole earth, is instinct with and breathes a life which entrances our senses, steals into and dilates the soul, and imparadises the heart.

10 THE ASPIRATIONS OF NATURE.

Nature, in all and through all things, smiles on us in our childhood. Fascinated by her charms, we yield ourselves willing captives to her embraces, and are happy beyond measure, and we know it not.

Such are childhood's opening scenes, and its early blessings. Were these only lasting, life would seem sufficient joy, and earth a paradise.

But kind nature deceived us. We were not happy. This was only an infant's dream of bliss ; a faint echo of lost Eden ; an enchantment whose charm was soon broken ; and, alas, we were left alone ! and strangers to that nature which appeared as though it were "bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh."

Childhood's sweet blossoms are crushed ; and we find ourselves strangers every where, to every one, to our own selves even ! Mystery covers all that hitherto stood open to our gaze and seemed so familiar. It is, indeed, strange to be conscious of loneliness in the wide world of things and existences, while all is around, and so near us ! To stand apart, to feel ourselves outside of all things ! To be fearfully alone, and to discover the prophet speaking our own language : "I beheld the earth, and lo it was void and nothing ; and the heavens, and there was no light in them. I beheld the

birds of the air, they were gone, and lo there was no man ! " *

What has robbed us of our early joys ? Is childhood's blissful vision for ever gone ? Oh, we ask no ray of light to see into the future, we would be a child again !

Alas ! its fair dreams have fled. Reality is making its prey of all that was so beautiful to behold. The flowers look faded ; the song of the birds is cheerless ; the air has lost all its freshness ; the earth, the sea, the sky, and all things are as though they were not. All is void : the heart forsaken ; paradise is closed ; the golden age is past ; and the soul, like the fabled Psyche, no longer content with past imperfect joys, is doomed to toil and wo, until it has realized the promises of its new-born capacities.

This is life's greatest moment, when the soul unfolds capacities which reach beyond earth's boundaries. We seem no longer the beings we were. New depths are broken up in the soul. Hidden energies come forth to light. A fresh life stirs within us. We know what we see is not what we seek, and what we seek we know not. Dimly opens to our vision a loftier and fairer world, promising an ampler bliss. The soul beholds its

* Jeremiah.

12 THE ASPIRATIONS OF NATURE.

goal, and like the butterfly which has escaped the chrysalis, finds now that its lot is away !

All great minds have recognized this fact : that man has capacities to conceive sublime truths ; powerful aspirations, noble presentiments which carry the soul beyond the region of sense, and lead it on to that brighter world where dwells the First True, the First Good, the First Fair—the eternal type of all perfections, and aim of all our strivings ;—

“ That even in savage bosoms
There are longings, yearnings, strivings
For the good they comprehend not.” *

It is written on every page and breathed through all the works of genius. The philosophers, from Plato to Kant, vainly strove to sound these secret depths of the soul ; the poets, from the author of “ Prometheus Bound ” to the author of the “ Intimations of Immortality,” exhausted their gifts to express it ; the pencil and the chisel have alike failed adequately to embody this mysterious birth of the conscious soul,—a birth which is the starting point of all philosophy, the ideal of all genius, and the basis of all religious beliefs.

No man of the world can be wholly unaware of the moment in his soul's history when he first became distinctly conscious of his own personal existence. It is this fact which throws so strange an interest around that most beautiful creation of genius, Undine.

How many hearts have thrilled ; how many a one has recognized that the sentiments are drawn from the secret depths of his own being, which Undine expresses, when she exclaims, half musing with herself, half inquiring from her new-found teacher :

“ ‘ There must be something lovely, but at the same time something most awful about a SOUL ! In the name of God, holy man, were it not better that we never shared a gift so mysterious ? ’ ”

“ She paused and restrained her tears as if waiting for an answer. She, however, seemed to have eyes for no one but the holy man ; a fearful curiosity was painted on her features, and this made her emotion appear terrible to others.

“ ‘ Heavily must the soul weigh down its possessor,’ she pursued, when no one returned her any answer ; ‘ very heavily ! for already its approaching image overshadows me with anguish and mourning, and, alas ! I have till now been so merry and light hearted,’ ” *

* Undine, ch. 3.

14 THE ASPIRATIONS OF NATURE.

Every effort to undo the soul's recognition of the great fact of its existence, seems but to fix it more firmly. We may writhe and struggle ; we may resolve to be as we were, and these efforts tend only to make this mysterious and new-awakened life more powerfully felt. For weal or for woe it is

“Born to perish never,
Which neither listlessness nor mad endeavor,
Nor man, nor boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy.”*

* Wordsworth.

II.

The Reality.

"These struggling tides of life that seem
In wayward, aimless course to tend,
Are eddies of the mighty stream
That rolls to an appointed end."

BRYANT.

THE soul naturally aspires to something which is better, higher, nobler, greater than itself. This aspiration is no fiction. For every act of a created being presupposes other existences.

We cannot think where there is nothing to be thought. We cannot love where there is nothing to be loved. We cannot act where there is nothing whereupon to act. Nothing can come of nothing.

The denial of this is the denial of the things we see, touch, taste, hear and smell ; it is the denial of our own existences, the world's existence,

and God's existence. It is the denial of all things. For the evidence of our being, and the evidence of the world's being, and the evidence of God's being, are seen simultaneously, and enter into one and the same fact of consciousness.

And the certitude of their several existences, is of equal authority ; for, although the organs through which Reason operates are not precisely of the same character, nevertheless Reason is one and indivisible, and is of equal authority in all that it duly attests.

Every operation of our faculties, therefore, is an incontestable evidence of the real being of something independent of our own being.

The certainty of our faculties is not only incontestable in regard to the fact of other existences, their certainty is equally incontestable in regard to the qualities and characteristics of those existences.

A rose does not affect us in the same way as a fine strain of music ; the sight of the ocean does not excite the same emotions as the society of our friends or families ; the remembrance of the Traitor Arnold produces quite different impressions from that of the patriot Washington.

Whilst we have remained the same, we have been subject to very diverse impressions. Why

is this? The reason is simple and plain. The objects before us were changed, and these being of a different character, we were consequently differently affected. For it is not the mind that creates things, or originates their qualities or characteristics, but it is these which inform and shape the mind.

The mind, therefore, takes cognizance of the existence not only of things, but also of their qualities and characteristics, and its authority is no less reliable in the latter functions of its activity than in the former.

But the cognizance of existences and of their qualities is the cognizance of Truth,—for Truth is all which is or exists. The mind of man, therefore, is the organ of Truth.

We take, therefore, our stand upon the unquestionable certitude of our faculties, and will permit no attempt to undermine their authority.

A well-organized and healthy mind will not allow an entrance to the slightest doubt concerning the evident authority of the operations of its own faculties.

To entertain such a doubt is no mark of wisdom, but rather a proof of folly. For it involves the palpable absurdity of proving that worthless which serves as the basis and instrument of proof.

Existence is not a dream, but a solemn reality. Life was not given to be thrown away on miserable sophisms, but to be employed in earnest search after Truth.

There is a doubt, however, which springs from a deficiency of evidence, or from a lack of information. This we respect, for it is an honest doubt—a mark of an honest, and the sign of the working of an independent mind. It

“Springs like a shoot, around the stock of truth ;
And it is nature, from height to height,
On to the summit prompts us.” *

The other kind of doubt, the pretended doubt, the one which professes to doubt whether the light we see be light, or whether what we know we know ; this is mental cowardice, or the symptom of a diseased intellect.

One day, Dr. Johnson was asked by Boswell what he thought of the pretended demonstration of certain would-be philosophers of the non-existence of matter ? The Dr. answered with alacrity by striking his foot with mighty force against a large stone till he rebounded from it, “I refute it thus.”

Let those whom this answer does not suffice,

* Dante.

be sent to an Insane Asylum ; for, according to their own showing, if one has no certitude of any thing, they condemn themselves to an eternal silence, or to talk nothing but nonsense.

To doubt, therefore, the evidence of our faculties, is a sign of an unsound intellect ; to deny the authority of their evidence, is to banish oneself outside of the domain of Reason, and, let us add, out of that also of humanity.

For the men that history enshrines on her immortal pages, the men whose memories are embalmed in the hearts of their fellows for all ages, were men who placed unfaltering trust in the loftiest convictions of the soul, and consecrated life and death to their realization.

Men whose minds were of this temper the whole human race cherish with enthusiasm and deathless attachment. Nations rear monuments to perpetuate the remembrance of their noble deeds. The bare mention of their names causes the hearts of men to palpitate with life, and fires the breasts of millions with heroic resolves. Such is the faith of man. These are the sentiments of humanity. And sentiments of such majesty, imparted to the entire human race, can not but be the impressions of the Divinity.

A philosophy, therefore, which does not justify

and support the high and glorious promises of our nature, misapprehends the powers of Reason, fails to recognize the nobility of the soul, is false to its mission, and deserves not a thought of a human being who respects himself, or who comprehends the great end of existence.

Resting, then, on the primary certitude of the operations of the human faculties as an incontestable and immovable basis, we affirm with their authority, and that of their great Author, that the very fact of the soul's possessing convictions which stretch forth beyond earth's horizon, is indisputable evidence of a world of realities corresponding to them.

III.

Loyalty.

"Call to mind from whence ye sprung;
Ye were not formed to live the life of brutes;
But virtue to pursue, and knowledge high."

DANTE.

MAN is gifted with an intelligence to see naturally into a world of more momentous realities, and as surely, as he sees with his eyes the material objects in the world around him. This world of unrealized realities is within his reach.

For what reason has man in being, if the noblest desire of his breast is the thirst after truth, and the truth does not exist, or exists beyond the scope of his capacities? If this be man's lot, then better were we quiet earth again, or rather, better had we never been aught but dust!

But the fault does not lie here, for truth does exist ; the striving after it is ample evidence that it does. Nor is man doomed, Tantalus-like, to strive after truth in vain ; for reason was given the capacity to lay hold of truth. The fault, then, is not on the side of truth, or in our faculties.

Wherein lies the fault ? The fault is in our neglect to use our faculties, or in not using them rightly.

And truth is not an ugly and merciless sphinx, but a fair and gentle maid. Eagerly she goes forth to meet the earnest seeker, and is easily won by the heroic lover. Earnestness in the search after truth, heroism in following it when found, these are the essential requisites for those who aspire to her friendship and love.

With a manly heart and bold resolves there is no true conception of the mind, no real aspiration of the heart, which may not be reached and realized. "Else desire was given to no end."

Indifference or unconcernedness in regard to the realization of the bright inspirations of divine truths, is no mark of a noble mind. This is an unmistakable evidence of the absence of those original convictions which constitute the soul's nobility and the dignity of our nature.

"Fame of such the world hath none,
Nor suffers; Mercy and Justice scorn them both.
Speak not of them, but look, and pass them by." *

These lofty aspirations, these boundless instincts, are traces of man's native nobility, and indicate the grandeur of his destiny. We should cherish them as our fondest hopes, and hold them dearer than life. Better live in a tub like Diogenes, and feed on wild roots, than submit to the dreadful degradation of yielding them up unrealized. For man has no other reason for living, but to unite his noblest capacities to their proper objects. This, and this alone, is the accomplishment of the great end of his present existence.

They give up the soul, and shrink into the grovelling instincts of the worm, who

"Pause not to inquire
Why we are here, and what the reverence
Man owes to man, and what the mystery
That links us to the greater world, beside
Whose borders we but hover for a space." †

Our sublime destiny and supreme happiness lie in the answer to our highest aspirations. The highest objects correspond to our highest capacities. Above Reason there is the Most High alone.

* Dante.

† Bryant.

24 THE ASPIRATIONS OF NATURE.

The Most High is the answer to our high aspirations and glorious destiny. Nothing less than the Infinite can content man's noble and most sovereign Reason.

But the relation of the soul with the infinite is Religion. Religion, therefore, is the answer to that cry of Reason which nothing can silence, that aspiration of the soul which no created thing can meet, that want of the heart which all creation cannot supply.

Where shall we find Religion ?

IV.

Choosing the Way.

"One good gift has the fatal apple given—
Your Reason:—let it not be overway'd
By tyrannous threats to force you into faith
'Gainst all external sense and inward feeling,"

BYRON.

THERE is a large class of men who cherish the lofty aspirations of their nature, and are loyal to their religious convictions. They feel deeply their religious necessities, and yearn and seek after a religion which, at the same time that it answers to these wants, does not contradict the universal dictates of reason.

We have it from authentic sources of information, that this class of minds compose more than one-half of our population who have arrived at the age of manhood ; and it includes many, if not

most of our intellectually-gifted and noble-minded countrymen.

What has brought about this state of things ? Does it spring from a want of religious sentiment, or earnestness on their part ? We opine that it does not. No people are more susceptible of religious impressions, no people are more in earnest in all that regards religion, than the American people. Witness the countless churches, the Sunday-school unions, missionary enterprises, Bible and Tract societies, and other religious institutions, broadcast over this extensive land. The man who would charge our people with infidelity, skepticism, or indifference in religious matters, would only display his unacquaintance with the heart and mind of the nation.

What, then, is the cause of this strange phenomenon of a people sincerely and earnestly religious, and yet having no fixed Christian belief ? Ask them, and those who have reflected will answer, in the lines of the poet Schiller :

‘ What’s my Religion ? None of all the sects
Which thou hast named. And why not ?
From RELIGION.”

The prevailing beliefs have presented Religion in such a light that men of mature thought could

not, without a feeling approaching to shame, and a certain sense of self-degradation, submit to their pretensions.

If Christianity be presented to men in such a way as to leave but the one choice, either to become fanatics or to profess no religion, where is there one who possesses a spark of reason, or has a manly feeling in his breast, that would not rather stand aloof from all religious sects, and pay such worship to his Creator as accords with the dictates of Reason and the inward convictions of the soul? Reliance on the rational convictions of our nature is the first of all duties.

The time is gone by when men can easily be made to believe that that is Religion which leads its votaries to contradict the dictates of Reason, or trample down the convictions of conscience. Nor does it sound well in the ears of an enlightened people, to tell them that the first step to Religion is to abdicate that which distinguishes man from the brutes which perish.

A large class of intellectual men share the conviction, that the only stable foundation for Religion is the human intelligence. They proclaim it openly to the world, that "Religion is yet to be settled on its fast foundations in the breast of man."

This is the great object to be aimed at in the present age. Would that those whom it concerns understood it ! Never can that be God's Religion which gainsays Reason's dictates and shocks the feelings of our moral nature.

The present generation of men, having receded from the common systems of Christian belief as unsatisfactory, have fallen back upon Human Nature. Human Nature alone can be taken for granted. The Religion, therefore, that is to meet the wants of the age, and answer its demands, must take its starting point from man's nature. It is, therefore, upon the essential and indestructible elements of Human Nature that Religion, particularly in this country, has to raise the foundations of its temple. The sanctuary of Religion must be restored to the place where the God of nature placed it, in the human soul.

The work of doubt, denial, destruction, is ended ; it awakens no enthusiasm. The cry for edification is heard abroad in the land.

Wearied with fruitless search, disgusted with mere negation, freed from the awful nightmare of doubt, the time for action is at hand. The age demands a Religion which unites reverence for God with a profound respect for the divinely-gifted intelligence and the heaven-born freedom of man.

Say not that an inquiry after the true Religion is not called for. It is. The teachers followed by our Fathers are destitute of the truths which the age demands. It is the cry of Reason, of the Soul, of all earnest minds, of the people of our country. They demand a Religion which opens a future worthy of their youthful energies, which answers to their high aspirations, and elicits from their hearts deeds of generous and noble self-sacrifice.

What else is the meaning of all the modern spiritualisms and evocations of departed spirits, except that the religious sentiment, finding in the common system of modern religious belief no satisfactory support or adequate answer to its demands, goes blindly groping about in its distress among the realms of the dead to discover something which will satisfy its deep, deathless, and irresistible yearnings?

We must therefore suffer the insupportable yearnings of our religious nature, or find the Religion which will afford them ample satisfaction.

The question of Religion is not a question of opinion. The question of Religion is one of life and death. To attempt to be and live without Religion is a gross injustice to our Reason, a cruel mutilation of our nature, and an insult offered to

God. To be without Religion is to be not a man, but a monster. Our people are famishing for it ; and we must have religion, the true Religion, or die,—die of despair or inanition. For Religion is man's inmost being and existence.

We may, however, be told that this inquiry after the true Religion is difficult ? Difficult ! Well, suppose it is, what then ? Are we not here to conquer difficulties ? For what purpose was the light of Reason bestowed on man if not to discover the Truth ? For what purpose was the strength of his will given, if not to employ it in search of Truth ? No ! truth is not so difficult of discovery as some would have us believe. Truth is ever ready to show herself to the sincere, the earnest, and hastens to the arms of the ingenuous lover.

Let us give ear to the cry of an "Earnest Seeker."

“THE CONFESSIONS

OF

“AN EARNEST SEEKER.”

V.

“Man.”

“WE are conscious of an intense and painful void within our breast. How are we to be relieved of this? Relief there must be; for it is insupportable. The insensibility of death were preferable. Forgetfulness a boon.

“Forgetfulness—

Of what,—of whom,—and why?

Of that which is within me;

Read it there—

Ye know it, and I cannot utter it.”*

“The world may appear beautiful; the ties of friendship, kindred, love, seem dear and sweet;

* Byron.

life may appear full of hope and bright prospects ;
 Alas ! what are all these joys to the soul, so long
 as deeper needs deprive us of their enjoyment ?

“ A different object do these eyes require ;
 My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine ,
 And in my heart the imperfect joys expire.” *

“ All sacrifices would be to us as steps to bliss,
 and renunciation enjoyment, so that we found
 what answers to our nobler necessities. A journey
 to the torrid zone, were we sure to meet it there,
 would be but a trip of pleasure. Somewhere it
 must be ; if not, the heavens will reveal it. This
 confidence is stronger than death.

“ Thank God ! we were left unſettered and
 unswayed in our belief, in our childhood and
 youth. We are in our full manhood, in possession
 of our reason and freedom. Happy is the man
 who is ready to receive the whole of God’s ever-
 lasting truth, and searches after it with all the
 energies of his being.

“ The possession of Truth, not the simple
 search of it, is the true end of Reason and the
 source of all true life. Whenever, therefore, the
 Truth is presented to the mind with rational and
 sufficient evidence, it matters not by whom, to

* Gray.

withhold one's assent, is to reduce Reason to the ignominious servitude of passion, and to inflict upon the soul the most painful of deaths,—the death of inanition.

"The slave is noble, his chains brilliant ornaments, he is free, in comparison with the man who enslaves his godlike Reason by his passions, shackles it by his prejudices, or lets it rust unused from slavish fears.

"Reason affirms its own authority, and can admit of no other which does not support its claims, and coincide with its dictates. Of all forms of slavery, that of the soul is the most abject, degrading, and cruel. The negro slave possesses his soul, but the man who yields up the authority of his Reason, abdicates his manhood, and renders his soul a chattel.

"Endowed with Reason, man has no right to surrender his judgment. Endowed with Free-Will, man has no right to yield up his liberty. Reason and Free-Will constitute man a responsible being, and he has no right to abdicate his independence. Judgment, Liberty, Independence, these are divine and inalienable gifts ; and man cannot renounce them if he would.

"As an intellectual being, man has the right to know the Truth. As a moral being, man has

the right to follow the Truth. Any authority that interferes with our exercise of these, violates the natural rights of man, and insults their Divine Author.

“The assent of Reason to truth is not the subjection of Reason, but its sublimest assertion. The voluntary following of Truth is not a restriction of our Free-Will, but the only and the truest expression of its liberty. The acknowledgment and acceptance of Truth constitute man’s true Independence, Dignity and Glory.

“Man cannot be thought of consistently with just and honorable ideas of his Creator, otherwise than as good, in possession of all his faculties, whose primal tendencies are in accordance with the great end of his being.

“There is no earthly Dignity equal to that of Human Nature, for there is stamped upon it, in glowing characters, the perfect resemblance of its Divine Author.

“Let us therefore be loyal to the dictates of Reason, knowing that they will lead us to our Archetype and Divine Original.

“Let the light of Truth be our guide. Let Reason be our Authority. We fear not to follow where they point the way. What contradicts Reason contradicts God.

VI.

“Religion.”

“WE go forth in earnestness and in hope, with the sacred torch of Reason in our hand, to seek, to find, and to accept true Religion, resolved at the same time to cast aside all creeds and systems of belief which exact the surrender of our judgment, independence, or liberty.

“If we find a religion to tell us that the truth we see is not truth, but falsehood ; if we find a religion to tell us that the good we love is not good, but evil ; if we find a religion to tell us that our good deeds are not virtues, but vices ; we in indignation answer : ‘ To the dogs with such a religion. We ask not its heaven ; nor fear its hell. Such a religion comes not down from heaven, but up from the bottomless pits below.’

“A religion which gainsays the plain dictates of Reason, is hostile to our holiest affections, or mutilates our nature, is no religion, but a base imposition. It is treason against God and Human Nature to listen to its horrid and impious creed. No, rather die a heathen or infidel than submit to a religion which outrages God by making the creatures of his own likeness, abject, base, accursed.

“We say, with the voice and the united energies of our soul, and the Author of our being : ‘Let the religion perish from the face of the earth which invades the sacred boundaries that constitute man’s Reason, or which would diminish the dignity of Human Nature.’

“Reason’s certitude is anterior to all other certitude, hence its authority is indisputable, and, in its own sphere, supreme. The denial of this is the undermining of the foundations of all knowledge of truth, and of all religious belief, and opens the way to the triumph of Atheism. The first step of the true Religion is to confirm the rightful authority of Reason, to call forth the full exercise of its powers, to elicit its free and undivided assent, and look to it for its confirmation, support, and defence.

“A religion, therefore, that is not an imposi-

tion, a fraud, cannot move a single step independently of the voluntary assent and suffrage of Reason. Its first duty is to afford rational and sufficient evidence of the doctrines which it teaches. Let it look to this, for the sake of its own honor, for a religion which interdicts the right exercise of Reason, or violates its laws, exposes itself, sooner or later, to the just indignation of all intelligent thinkers.

"No truth or doctrine of Religion is really believed and held without an act of the intelligence and will. These united constitute man's rational nature. A religion unsupported by the inward witness and free assent of Reason to its truth, is no religion, but a delusion, an hypocrisy. For man, as a rational being, cannot, if he would, embrace a religious belief which is contrary to his essential nature—Reason.

"As on one hand Religion is bound to attest with satisfactory evidence the divine origin of the truths which it proposes to our belief, so on the other hand, we are bound to accept the truths so presented. To believe is not less a function of Reason than to know, or to perform any other of its normal operations. The refusal, therefore, of our belief to truths duly attested, is a violation of our allegiance to Reason, and if consistently carried out, would end in its entire overthrow.

“Religion adds no new faculty to the soul. A sure mark of its divine origin is, that when fairly presented, it meets and welcomes all the honest demands of the intellectual and moral faculties of our nature, and in such a way as to produce an entire conviction of its truth. True Religion opens to our intellectual vision the great end of our existence, and so directs, strengthens, and excites our will and its energies that we reach it.

“It should not be forgotten that the destiny of the soul and body is one and indivisible. For man is soul and body, inseparably united in one person. The body, therefore, has a religious purpose. ‘Nothing is holier than that high form.’ A religion which is of divine origin must be adapted, in its doctrines and worship, to the whole of man’s nature.

“There is no use of disguising the fact, our religious needs are the deepest. There is no peace until they are satisfied and contented. The attempt to stifle them is vain. If their cry be drowned by the noise of the world, they do not cease to exist. In some unexpected moment they will break forth with redoubled energy. They must be answered. And unless they be satisfactorily answered, they will rise up at the last hour

of life, and, with irresistible force, seize upon the mind, and strike terror into the soul.

"It is a necessity, therefore, to find a religion coinciding with the dictates of Reason, and commensurate with the wants of our whole nature, or else to wait for its revelation.

"If we find no such religion, and God deigns not to reveal it, then on our tomb shall be written, 'Here lies one who asked with sincerity for truth, and it was not given. He knocked earnestly at the door of truth, and it was not opened. He sought faithfully after truth, and he found nothing

VII.

“Church.”

“RELIGION is a question between God and the Soul. No human authority, therefore, has any right to enter its sacred sphere. The attempt is sacrilegious.

“Every man was made by his Creator to do his own thinking. What right then has one man, or a body of men, to dictate their belief, or make their private convictions, or sentiments, binding upon others ?

“There is no degradation so abject, as the submission of the eternal interests of the soul to the private authority or dictation of any man, or body of men, whatever may be their titles. Every right sentiment in our breast rises up in abhorrence against it.

"A Church which is not of divine origin, and claims assent to its teachings, or obedience to its precepts, on its own authority, is an insult to our understandings, and deserves the ridicule of all men who have the capacity to put two ideas together.

"A Church that claims a divine origin, in order to be consistent must also claim to be unerring ; for the idea of teaching error in the name of the Divinity, is blasphemous.

"A Church, if it deserves that title, must yield us assistance, and not we the Church. The Church that needs our assistance, we despise. Only the Church which has help from above for mankind, and is conscious of it, is a divine institution.

"A Church that has its origin in heaven, is an organ of divine inspiration and life to humanity. For Religion is not only a system of divinely given truths, but also the organ of a divine life. Life, and its transmission, is inconceivable, independent of an organism. The office of the Church, therefore, is not only to teach divine truths, but also to enable men to actualize them.

"If entrance into the Church is not a step to a higher and holier life, the source of a larger and more perfect freedom, her claims do not merit

a moment's consideration. Away with the Church that reveals not a loftier manhood, and enables men to attain it.

“The object of the Church authority is not to lay restraints on man's activity, but to direct it aright ; not to make him a slave, but to establish his independence ; the object of Church authority is to develop man's individuality, consecrate and defend his rights, and elevate his existence to the plane of his divine destiny.

“Divine Religion appeals to man's holiest instincts, and inspires the soul with a sublime enthusiasm. A Church without martyrs is not on equality with the institution of the family or state ; for they are not wanting in heroes. A Church that ceases to produce martyrs is dead.

“Hearts are aching to be devoted to the down-trodden and suffering of the race. Breasts are elated with heroic impulses to do something in the noble cause of Truth and God ; and shall all these aspirations and sentiments which do honor to our nature, be wasted, misspent, or die out for want of sanction and right direction ? Who can give this sanction ? Who can give this direction ? No one but God's Church upon earth. This is her divine mission.

“In concert with the voice of all those who

are conscious of their humanity, we demand a visible and divine authority to unite and direct the aspirations and energies of individuals and nations to great enterprises for the common welfare of men upon earth, and for eternity.

"If the Religion we are in search of does not exist, and we remain in darkness, we shall be found standing upright, looking heavenward, our Reason unshackled, in all the dignity and energy of our native manhood.

"Better roam for aye, than rest
Under the impious shadow of a roof unblest.'"*

* De Vere.

VIII.

The Search.

"Arise, good youth! . . .

I know thine inmost bosom, and I feel
A very brother's yearning for thee steal
Into mine own: for why? Thou openest
The prison-gates that have so long oppressed
My weary watchings."

KEATS.

THOUGHTS like the preceding are largely shared by the living men of our time. Only genuine Religion can answer their high but just and searching demands. A false religion must not venture to face them. Its first words would be the sentence of its own condemnation. Never had true Religion so glorious a field for its conquest, never had a false religion so much to dread.

Hitherto the conquests of Religion were among pagans, idolaters, and savages. Peoples

who held a false religion, and subject to almost unconquerable prejudices and inveterate superstitions. Here we have men enlightened by Reason, free for the most part from false religions, and open to the convictions of Truth. What a noble prospect for the triumph of true Religion ! What a beautiful career for the champions of that Religion which has its origin in heaven ! True Religion has nothing to dread from the right use of Reason ; it demands free inquiry, and courts the strictest scrutiny, for the foundations on which true Religion stands are eternal.

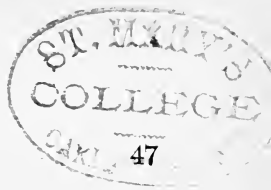
In other places, infidelity, skepticism, prejudice, is rife and stalks over the land ; an evident determination to reject all religion in spite of the voice of Reason and the cries of our religious nature. We have little of that among us. That little is of foreign importation.

Our civilization is young, fresh, and in the vigor of its manhood. New elements are at work in it. We cannot repeat the past if we would. The new world promises a new civilization. And in this unfettered civilization, true Religion will find a reception it has in vain looked for elsewhere, and a development of unprecedented glory. For Religion is never so attractive and beautiful as when connected with intelligence and free conviction.

Our youthful people are ready to offer their hearts to the embraces of the Religion of heaven, as the soil of our country presents its virginal bosom to our countrymen for its cultivation.

This moment is a crisis, the great crisis of our history. For no people ever became great without religion. A religion, too, superior to themselves. A religion which was to them the source of their highest and purest inspiration. A religion which, in its main elements at least, was of divine origin. A religion which furnished ideals to its poets and artists, and enlightened the minds and nerved the arms of its sages and heroes to great enterprises. It is the very nature and essence of Religion to raise men, peoples and nations, above the common level of life, to break through its ordinary bounds, and express itself in a thousand ways, in poetry, painting, music, sculpture, and in every other form of ideal expression. The splendid monuments of the genius and greatness of by-gone ages are the monuments inspired by their religion.

Our destiny as a nation hangs on this moment. For no nation, as no individual, becomes fully conscious of its capacities, discovers its divine destination, until it is wholly under the influence of religious inspiration. No people becomes properly a nation, acts as one man, unfolds its highest



THE SEARCH.

capabilities, displays its true genius and utmost strength, until it becomes not only politically and socially, but religiously, of one mind and heart. Religion ever was and for ever must be the highest source of inspiration, and the most powerful engine of progress in every department of human activity. Religion strikes the deepest roots into the human heart, inspires with divine light man's intelligence, and gives to his will a superabundant strength and the noblest kind of heroism. The zenith of glory of every nation is the period of the highest degree of its religious culture and development.

The whole character of our future depends on the direction of our present step. For in proportion to the intenseness of the unity of a people in a common religious belief, so will be their energy. In proportion to the universality of the principles of their religious belief will be the grandeur of their development. In proportion to the sublimity, purity, and truth of their religious belief, will be the stability and splendor of their civilization. Religion—true, genuine Religion alone, makes a people a nation, powerful, great, glorious, and like herself, eternal. The character of a nation's destiny is taken from the nature of its religion.

Our people begin to feel the necessity of a

religion adequate to their wants, adapted to their genius, and capable of guiding them to their divine destination. A religion coextensive with our vast extent of territory, in harmony with the spirit of our free institutions, embracing in one brotherhood the entire human race, and drawing its authority from the bosom of God.

The American people feel the need of such a religion, the need of its divine sanction, and its blessings and guidance.

Never in the history of man has there been presented a spectacle of greater interest than the new page which our people are at this moment unfolding before the world's expectation.

The promises of the past, the hopes of the present, the interests of the future, are bound up and vitally connected with our efforts and successes.

America is the country of the Future. The living God is above us, and the blessings of heaven are with us. Let us then go forward, trusting that our convictions will bring us to the realities which they foreshadow.

IX

Genthen Philosophy.

"Philosophy is the endeavor to solve the formidable problems which torment the soul. The philosophical sentiment is the craving to pursue these solutions with the torch of Reason and Science."

INTROD. TO JOUFFRAY; BY GEORGE RIPLEY.

WHERE shall we go to find the religion of heaven? Is it among the ancients we shall find it? Shall we find in the writings of the philosophers and sages of Greece and Rome complete and satisfactory answers to the problems which torment the soul? We are told so. But we fear, not. By-gone ages listened to their solutions, and found them to be insufficient for Reason, and unsatisfactory to the heart. The sages and philosophers of the ancients were listened to, not by men hostile to their religions, or preju-

diced, but by men of genius, able to comprehend and appreciate their teachings. They were even their own cherished disciples.

Lucian tells us, in his "Dialogues of the Dead :—" "In the state of ignorance and perplexity in which I was concerning the origin of the world, I thought that I could do no better than have recourse to the philosophers. Persuaded that they were the depositaries of all truths, and that they would dispel all my doubts, I addressed myself to those of them whom I thought the more clever. I judged their merit by the gravity of their exterior, the paleness of their countenances and the length of their beards ; unerring signs, as I thought, of the depth and the subtlety of their knowledge. I placed myself in their hands ; and after having agreed upon the price, which was not a trifle, I desired at first to be instructed regarding all that they say happens in heaven, and to know how they would go to work to explain the order we meet everywhere in the universe. What was my astonishment, when all my learned masters, far from dissipating my first uncertainty, plunged me into a blindness a thousand times more obscure ! I had my ears every day stunned with their great words of *principles, ends, atoms, void, matter, form*. What was most insufferable for me, was

that each of them taught me precisely the contrary to what the other said, exacted that I should confide in him alone, and pretended that his system was alone the right one and good."

Such was the result of the efforts of Lucian to find among the philosophers of his time the answers to the formidable questions which torment Reason.

The philosopher Justin was a devout student of Plato's writings and disciple of his doctrines. Did he find them satisfactory? By no means. In regard to the prince of philosophers, he says: "I abandon Plato, not that his doctrine is contrary to the truth, but because it is insufficient and fragmentary. The same judgment I pass on the disciples of Zeno, and your poets and historians." Origen, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Augustine and other great minds, pass the same judgment on the results of the endeavors of the sages and philosophers of the Grecian states, and of those of the Roman empire. They sought ardently, they devoted their time and best energies of their minds, to find the solutions to the dark enigmas of life in the schools and writings of the various philosophies, and found them wanting.

“None

Could whisper to them a saving spell
That might the house of death illumine ; or raise
Even in life the soul to hope and peace,
Or look for ultimate union with the light.” *

That the solutions of the ancient philosophers were inadequate to the demands of Reason, is an historical fact. A sufficient evidence of the truth of this is their having passed into oblivion. Thus a palpable proof of the insufficiency of the ancient philosophical schools is found in their inability to establish themselves as permanent institutions of society. They could not stand the test of the strict scrutiny of enlightened Reason. Men may be duped, for their lives are short ; not so with humanity, it lives for ages. Hence what is not commensurate with all the wants of man's nature, can never become universal either in time or space.

If this statement be not satisfactory, we will ourselves inquire of the schools of ancient philosophy an answer to one of the great questions of Reason. The greatest question which Reason can ask is : What is the nature of God ? Upon the character of the solution given to this question all religious beliefs, all religious worships, all moral actions depend. What, then, is the voice of the

* Bailey.

ancients concerning the existence and nature of God ?

Strange to say, we are stopped at the very threshold of our inquiry with the doubt, whether the ancient philosophers taught consistently the existence of the one true God ! Cicero, who was conversant with the writings of the ancient philosophers and doctrines of their schools, has given a pretty complete summary of their opinions on this point, in his book entitled “ Concerning the Nature of the Gods.”

“ Thales,” he tells us, “ believed water to be the source of all things. Anaximander’s opinion was, that the gods were born at different intervals, and died after a great length of time. Anaximenes taught that the air was God. Anaxagoras affirmed that all things were contrived by an infinite mind. Alemas of Croton attributed a divinity to the sun, the moon, and the stars. Pythagoras supposed the Deity to be one soul, mixing with and pervading all nature. Zenophanes would have all the parts of the universe to be infinite, and possessed of mind, and called that God. Pæmandes formed an orb of heat like a crown, and this he named God. Protagoras acknowledged that he did not know whether there were, or were not gods, or what they were. Democritus denies that there is any

thing eternal. Plato, in his *Timæus*, denies the propriety of asserting a Father of the world, and in his books of *Laws*, he says, one ought not to make any inquiry concerning it. He likewise asserts, in both these books, that the world, the heavens, the stars, the earth, the mind, and men, are God. Plato's disciples made God a round figure, because their master said this was the most beautiful. Xenophon, while he disputes the lawfulness of inquiring into the form of the Deity, asserts the sun, the moon, and the mind to be deities. He affirms the existence of one only God, and denies it in the same breath by declaring there are many. Aristotle does not differ from his master, Plato ; one while he attributes all divinity to the mind ; another while he asserts the world to be God. Soon after he makes some other essence preside over the world ; then he asserts the heat of the elements is God. Zenocrates, his fellow-pupil, says, that the number of gods is eight, whom he locates in the stars and planets. Heraclides, of the same school of Plato, thinks the world is the Deity ; at other times the mind ; then the wandering stars. Theophrastus is equally unsteady ; now it is mind that is God, then the firmament, then again the stars and celestial signs. Zeno thinks the laws of nature to be God ; by and by he attributes the same

power to the stars, the years, the months and seasons. Aristo, Zeno's disciple, is altogether in doubt whether the Deity is an animated being or not. Cleanthes, another disciple of the same master, one while says the world is God ; at other times he bestows divinity on the mind and the spirit of universal nature ; then he asserts it is neither ; again, the stars are the divinity ; and lastly, nothing is more divine than Reason."

Arrived at this stage of his investigations, seized as it were with bewilderment, amidst these absurd and conflicting opinions, Cicero gives expression to the voice of the common sentiment of mankind, when he exclaims, "Alas, that this God whom we know by our Reason, and of whom each one bears traces in his breast, by the labors of these men is wholly obliterated from the mind !"

And what more striking proof can be asked, than the fact that millions of individuals of both sexes, of every age and rank, were put to the most cruel tortures and death by the edicts of heathen Emperors, many of whom professed philosophy, and for what ? Why, for no other reason than that they would not pay divine honors to men and demons, to stocks and stones, and even creeping things ! For what other crime was Socrates put to death, than venturing to insinuate in the mind of men the unity of God ?

As regards the opinions of ancient philosophers concerning the soul, they were no less absurd and contradictory than those given above "on the Nature of the Gods." The same Cicero concludes a *resumé* of their opinions in his Tusculan Questions as follows: "In this matter the philosophers leave us in complete incertitude; and it is a great question which of them is true."

Philosophy by her Platos, Aristotles, Zenos, was in the greatest incertitude, and taught the most absurd inconsistencies on these great problems which torment our intelligence. Nor were the ancient philosophers more successful in regard to the right rules of moral action. Marcus Varro counts up no less than two hundred and eighty-eight different opinions, which might be easily gathered from the doctrines of the philosophers concerning the relations of man with God.

Far be it from us to disparage, or to look down with contempt on the sincere efforts and earnest search for truth, displayed by several of the ancient sages and philosophers. No one who has had it for his task to find the truth in the midst of error, single and unaided, will be disposed to despise the generous efforts of others who had to fight the same battle, under less favorable circumstances.

But surely no one will at this day impose upon

men the task of finding the solutions of the dark enigmas of life, or of fixing the true religion and determining the worship agreeable to the Deity, from the writings, or the schools, of philosophers of the ancient world, of whom

“ The best
Were erring guides ; the worst were all but all.
The world was one enigma ; life appeared
A bridge of groans across a stream of tears.” *

* Bailey.

X.

German Philosophy.

"Sweet milk philosophy!"

SHAKESPEARE.

IF the ancient philosophers were unable to give satisfactory answers to the demands of Reason, it may have been because this task was left to some after age and people to accomplish. What age can boast of greater enlightenment than the Nineteenth Century? Which of the nations on the earth is superior in philosophical genius to the people of Germany? Every age has its work, every people its mission; where can we look with brighter hopes for success to our search, than among these bold adventurers on the broad ocean of thought?

Kind reader, we beg, be not startled at the



GERMAN PHILOSOPHY.

idea of making a philosophical tour through the dry, dreary, barbarous field of speculation of the profound thinkers of Germany. Be assured that it is far from our intention to inflict a long dissertation on their discoveries and relative merits. Patience ! we shall be brief, unbiased, and intelligible.

Emmanuel Kant is entitled, if any one, to the name of the Father of the philosophy of modern Germany.

What is the true nature of Reason, and how is Reason to be placed upon that road by which we can march on a scientific basis in all philosophical speculations and researches after knowledge ? This was the problem that Emmanuel Kant endeavored to solve in his celebrated work entitled "Critic of Pure Reason."

We shall not fatigue our readers with following the philosopher of Königsberg through his in many respects masterly examination of the powers of Reason. The results of his labors and philosophical genius will suffice us.

Accordingly Kant tells us :—"All the powers of Reason in pure philosophy are, in fact, directed to the three great problems : The existence of God : The Immortality of the Soul : The Freedom of the Will." Now, what is the value of

Reason in regard to the solution of these three great questions which never cease to occupy its powers and torment it unless rightly answered ?

“What can I know?” asks boldly this great German thinker, at the close of his long, laborious, and severe critic of Reason’s powers. The answer to this question, gives the direction to all the philosophical investigations of the then future German mind. Little did Kant think that the peace and happiness of thousands, and even millions, depended on the solution he should give to this question: “What can I know?” “Is there a God?” “Am I immortal?” “Are we free?” Every thing hangs upon the character of the answers given to these great questions; society, the state, man’s past, present, and future. Behold the answer of the Father of modern German transcendental philosophy to the gravest, most important, and vital question that ever was asked by man: “What can I know?” From the great ends to which all these efforts of pure Reason were in fact directed, such is his language: “We remain just as far removed as if we had consulted our ease, and declined the task at the outset.” *

According then to the Master Genius of German

* Critic of Reason, p. 453—Bohn’s edition

thought, Philosophy is not able to give to man satisfactory solutions to the great questions which agitate Reason. These great and momentous questions, these questions of life and death to man, are mere problems, for and against which the arguments are of equal force and value ; hence the Existence of God, the Immortality of the Soul, the Freedom of the Will, stand on the basis of being mere plausible hypotheses. In other words, Kant's answer to the question, "What can I know?" reduced to simple words, is : I can know nothing ! Is not this sheer skepticism ? Thus Reason is a mocking gift, and man is doomed to have his life's energies tormented and devoured by uncertainty and doubt, like the vultures which devoured the vitals of the rock-bound Prometheus.

True to his philosophical character, Kant died a consistent philosopher. Being asked a few days before his death by his friend Hasse, "what he hoped for in the future life?" he replied : "On that point I have no fixed opinions." At another time he said, "I have no notion of a future state."

Fichté, the distinguished disciple of Kant, pushed the doctrines of his master to their logical consequences. What Kant pronounced in doubt, and with hesitating lips, Fichté affirms with assurance and with the tone of sincerity. According

to Kant, we cannot affirm from the image within to what is without ; so, according to Fichté, as it is only the image within we see, we cannot logically conclude that any thing without exists at all. Philosophy defined in the spirit of Fichté would be : The dialogue of a man with his own shadow. And God is nothing else than man's intuition of his own nature considered as an independent existence. In keeping with his transcendental philosophy, Fichté, at the close of one of his celebrated lectures at Berlin, announced the subject of the subsequent evening as follows : "To-morrow evening, gentlemen, I will construct God."

Fichté, for his philosophical ability, was called to fill the chair of Philosophy at the celebrated University of Jena ; but sacrificed his position by defending the proposition that "God is to be thought as an order of events, to think of God as a substance, or with a personality, is to fall into contradictions and absurdities." Is not this Atheism ?

It is said that Fichté before his death adopted opinions more consonant with the universal convictions of man's religious nature. For his soul's sake it would be an unpleasant reflection to think otherwise.

Schelling is the next great representative of

German philosophy. To give an adequate idea of Schelling's system or systems, would be an endless task. For so many have been the changes of Schelling that it has been said, that the best refutation of his philosophy would be an exact catalogue of his works. To escape, however, such a humiliation while living, he declared it to be his intention to give his last word on philosophy only at the end of his life. To increase our Tantalus-like agony, this philosopher lives to a ripe old age, and then leaves us hopelessly in the dark.

George Hegel is the next great German philosophical thinker. The fundamental formula of philosophy, according to this philosopher, is the Identity of contradiction—"Seyn und Nicht Seyn," being and not being, is one and precisely the same thing. His first axiom of philosophy is : Das Seyn ist Das Nichts. The first step towards becoming a philosopher, according to George Hegel, is to throw overboard common sense, and the disordering of one's reason.

"God," according to this profound German thinker, "arrives in man to the most perfect consciousness of his being ; for the Absolute consists in the identity of being and knowledge ; to think, therefore, is to be God. Hence, without man and

the world, God was not complete, nor was he yet God." * Is not this pantheism?

Let us listen to the confession of one of his celebrated disciples: "I accepted," says Heine the poet, "without examination, the synthesis of Hegelian philosophy, the logical consequences of which tickled my vanity. I was young and proud—my pride was not moderately flattered with the idea that I was a god. I never would believe that God had become man; I taxed with superstition this sublime dogma, and later I believed Hegel at his word when I heard him affirm that man was God."

Speaking of his labors to bring out Hegel's philosophy, in a French translation he says: "I was occupied with this task during two years, and I was successful, by force of painful efforts, to master this rebel matter and to give a form as clear as possible to the most cloudy thoughts of this philosopher; but when my work was ended, I was seized at its aspect with a shivering, and it seemed to me that the MSS. looked on me with a strange, mocking, contemptuous eye. The Translator and his work accorded no longer together. It was at this period that an aversion for atheism seized hold of my soul; and as I was

* Religions Philosophie.

forced to avow that my impiety had found its source and its principal support in the philosophy of Hegel, it began to weigh on me . . . I saw that the publication of such a work could not be salutary either to the public or the Translator ; and one day when the fire sparkled gaily on my hearth, I threw my MSS. into the flames, as formerly my friend Kitzler did on a like occasion. Then when these leaves, the fruit of so much labor, disappeared in the flames, I heard in the chimney a hissing sound like the laugh of a fiend. Oh ! could I but annihilate in the same manner all that I have ever published on German philosophy !” *

Such were the teachings, logical conclusions, and practical effects of the doctrines of the too famous German thinker, Mr. George Hegel, whose philosophy one might define : a metaphysical discourse on the text, “ You shall be as Gods,” which was promulgated by a very suspicious personage some six thousand years ago.

Hegel had other disciples :—Strauss, Bruno Bauer, Feuerbach. These were the more ardent in following the footsteps of their master. “ The most consequent of the terrible children of our modern philosophy,” says the same Heine, “ the

* Les aveux d'un poët. Revue des Deux Mondes. 1854.

modern Corypheus, is one who bears really the name of lake of fire (Feuerbach), he proclaims, in concert with his friends, the most radical atheism as the last word of our metaphysics. With a bacchanalian frenzy, these impious zealots tear the blue veil from the heavens of Germany, and cry out: Look, all the divinities have fled, and there resides on high only an old woman with iron hands and a desolated heart,—Necessity !” *

Let us listen for a moment to some of the proclamations of this philosopher of young Germany.

“There is no other essence,” so says Lewis Feuerbach, “which man can think of, dream of, imagine, feel, believe in, wish for, love and adore as the Absolute, than the essence of human nature itself.” † “Man is his own God.” ‡ “This is the great practical principle—this is the axis on which revolves the history of the world.” § The revelation of God is nothing else than the revelation, the self-unfolding, of human nature. || “Religion is a dream, in which our own conceptions and emotions appear to us as separate existences, beings out of ourselves.” ¶

Such are the logical consequences of the prin-

* Les aveux d'un poët. *Revue des Deux Mondes*. 1854.

† Essence of Christianity.

‡ Ibid. Homo homini deus est.

§ Ibid.

|| Ibid.

¶ Ibid.

ciples of the great philosophical movement of Germany. And what is worthy of remark, and curious too, is that each of these philosophers in his enthusiasm professed to have discovered the philosophy of the Absolute, and therefore promised for himself and his writings an undying fame. Some went so far as to proclaim themselves not only the Apostles of truth, but its Messiah, the Eternal. Thus Kant, so the Kantians in all sincerity believed, had settled all the questions of Reason on a firm basis, and his philosophy was to have a reign without end. Then Fichté rose and gave his master's philosophy such a hearty Teutonic blow that it failed to keep upright and fell. Reinhold planked himself between the two. Schelling came and changed and changed, and, changing, left the scene. Hegel came, and God only knows the divisions of his disciples into right and left, extreme right and extreme left, forwards and backwards, upwards and downwards, until old chaos came again, and by right reigns supreme over the brood of deep thinkers of the German philosophical world.

XI.

French Philosophy.

"Philosophy is the last enfranchisement of Reason; the intelligence and explication of all things; the source of a superior and an unalterable peace."

VICTOR COUSIN.

LEAVING the mystic Germans brooding over their profound speculations and lifeless abstractions, in their primeval forests, we will turn our attention to the practical and vivacious thinkers of sunny France.

The first who strikes our attention among modern French thinkers, is M. Victor Cousin, with his school of Eclectics. What promises are held out here in the shape of philosophy? Victor Cousin does not hesitate to picture for us the brightest and most cheering prospects. Like his German predecessors and cotemporaries, he sets out with the ambition to "construct a philosophy

superior to all systems—philosophy in itself—and consequently everlasting.”*

In addressing the young men of France, he proclaims that “philosophy is the last victory of thought over every strange form and element ; it is the highest degree of liberty of intelligence ;—it is the last enfranchisement and the last progress of thought. It is the light of all lights, the authority of authorities. It is true that, in place of forming a party in the human race, it eliminates all parties. Young men, arrived at the close of your previous studies, you will find in philosophy, with the intelligence and explication of all things, a superior and unalterable peace.”†

We breathe freer, our hopes revive, and we are prompted to exclaim : At length we have found the man who will give us satisfactory explanations of the formidable problems of Reason, and the intelligence of the dark enigmas of life. Let us listen with profound respect and our whole attention, as is due to so great a philosopher. To begin with the beginning. What does he say of God ?

“My God,” he replies, “is the God of consciousness, who is at the same time God—Nature—Humanity. . . If God be not all, He is noth-

* Preface to Tenneman's Hist. of Philos.

† Introd. Hist. de la Philos.

ing. . . It is in the human consciousness that God appears to himself." . . "Creation is not possible ; it is necessary. . . God cannot but create ; and in creating the universe he does not draw it from nothingness, but from Himself." *

We are greatly mistaken if there be any real difference between the God of Spinoza, George Hegel, and Schelling, and the God of M. Victor Cousin. "And such a being is not the God of the human race. He is not a God distinct from the world. Now the negation of a God distinct from the world has a well-known name in every language, as well as philosophy." The only difference we are able to discover between the God of the former from the latter is, that one clothes him with a German and the other with a French costume.

As regards the soul, this French philosopher has the hardihood to tell us "that its immortality is a sublime probability, which perhaps eludes the rigor of a demonstration."

In view of these facts, we are surprised how one of his able American translators could hold the following language in his *Introductory to Cousin's Philosophical Miscellanies* : "Every primitive belief of humanity is invested, in his eyes, with a

* Cousin's *Hist. Philos.*

character of peculiar, I may say, indeed, of awful sanctity." . . . "And that the philosophy of Cousin exhibits to the speculative inquirer, in the rigorous forms of science, the reality of our instinctive faith in God, in Virtue, in the Human Soul, in the Beauty of Holiness, and in the Immortality of Man. Such a philosophy," he contends, "I cannot but believe will ultimately find a cherished abode in the youthful affections of this nation, in whose history, from the beginning, the love of freedom, the love of philosophical inquiry, and the love of Religion, have been combined in a thrice holy bond."

Happily for us is it, that this belief has not been fulfilled ; for, take from M. Victor Cousin his brilliant style and French enthusiasm, and you take away all that distinguishes his philosophy from the German Pantheism. This is not to be wondered at, when he delights in acknowledging that "he borrowed much from Hegel and Schelling, and felt honored publicly to call them his masters and friends, and the leaders of the philosophy of the age." *

Theodore Jouffray, Cousin's most distinguished disciple, less cautious than his master, avows frankly that the question of the Soul's Immortal-

* Frag. Philos.

ity "is premature, . . . and until now nothing completely demonstrative has been produced in its favor. . . and that the opinion which attributes the facts of consciousness to a principle distinct from all corporeal organs, may be considered till now as an hypothesis." *

But Jouffray will let us farther into the secrets of the teaching, and the destructive effects, of the school of Eclectics and their master. Let us listen to some of the avowals made but shortly before his death, and mutilated by M. Victor Cousin before being given to the public. In speaking of the time of his youth he says : "As to the questions which alone merit the attention of man, the religion of my fathers gave me the answers ; I believed, and, thanks to this belief, the life of the present was clear, and beyond it I saw the future which was to follow it, unroll itself without a cloud. Tranquil about the path which I had to follow in this world ; tranquil as regards the end to which it must lead me in the other, comprehending life in both its phases, and death that unites them ; comprehending myself ; knowing the designs of God in my regard, and loving him for the goodness of his designs, I was happy with that happiness which flows from a lively and cer-

* Esquisse de Philos. Morale.

tain faith, and a doctrine which resolves all the grand questions which can interest man."

No longer possessing the light of this faith, unable to suffer the incertitude which preyed upon his mind as regards the enigmas of man's destiny, "I resolved," he says, "to consecrate all the time which might be necessary, and my whole life if it were required, to their research. It was in this way that I found myself led to philosophy, which, it seemed to me, could be nothing else than this research itself."

Jouffray now enters l'Ecole Normale, at the head of which was M. Victor Cousin, teaching his philosophy with great éclat to the youth of France. "What did I find there?" asks Jouffray. "All the disputes which had animated the slumbering echoes of the Faculty, and which agitated the heads of my companions in study, had for their object, their only object, . . . the question of the origin of ideas. This was all, . . . and in the helplessness in which I then was, I could not recover my astonishment that they should be occupied with the origin of ideas with so great an ardor, that it could be said that in this all philosophy was included, leaving aside man, God, the world, the relations which unite them, the enigmas of the past and the mysteries of the future,

and so many gigantic problems concerning which it was not dissimulated that they were skeptical.

“All philosophy was in a pit where there was no air, and where my soul, recently exiled from Christianity, was smothered.”

Behold the realization of that promise to the young men of France, “of finding in philosophy, with the intelligence and explication of all things, a superior and an unalterable peace !”

But the history of modern philosophy in France runs parallel with that of its parent source in Germany. Philosophy in Germany did not stop with Kant, Fichté, Hegel ; it found its last expression in Strauss, Bauer, Feuerbach ; in France Leroux, Sand, and Proudhon, are its latest offspring.

Leroux partakes of the positiveness of the later school of Germans, and declares, “No, the soul is not distinct from the body. The earth is not outside of Heaven . . . Seize heaven in the present life.” Such are the doctrines of the great Humanitarian, Pierre Leroux.

But the French Feuerbach, the corypheus of the latest school of philosophy in France, is Proudhon. One word from this logician of the bottomless pit, and we end, for with him all ends.

“I tell you,” says this demoniac man,

“that the first duty of an intelligent and free man is to chase incessantly from the mind and conscience the idea of God. Because God, if He does exist, is essentially hostile to our nature, and we elevate ourselves only at the expense of His authority. We arrive at science in spite of Him ; at society in spite of Him ; each step we take is a victory in which we crush the Divinity. With time I will idealize my being, and I will become the chief of creation, the equal of God.” Our pen stops, our hand refuses to transcribe any further, and we are seized with a shudder at the outrageous blasphemies of this terrible Atheist.

What now are the results of Modern Philosophy charged to speak to man of God,—of the soul,—of the formidable problems of his existence? God is banished ; the soul is a fiction ; and Heaven a mockery. It has substituted in place of man’s original and everlasting convictions, a sickly skepticism ; in place of the bright inspirations of divine truths, an inscrutable chaos ; in place of his high hopes, blank despair !

XII.

Aspirations of Reason.

"There are
Powers deeper still beyond—I come in quest
Of such, to answer what I seek."

BYRON.

IF such be the legitimate results of both ancient and modern philosophy, what, in this case, is the value of Reason? Who will pretend to say that Socrates, Plato, Kant, Hegel, Cousin, Jouffray, did not possess Reason, Reason informed and developed by profound and severe studies, cultivated and refined by long and continued exercise; and if they failed to give satisfactory solutions to the dark enigmas of life, is not this to declare that the highest efforts of Reason are vain, and consequently Reason is but a delusive and mocking gift? After a condemnation of this

kind, to talk of man's sovereign and godlike Reason, is to prate nonsense, insincerity, and sham.

Patience, indulgent reader, and be careful not to fall into the mistake which is not seldom made, of taking the speculations of a certain class of men called philosophers, for a fair, adequate, and faithful expression of the capabilities and powers of Reason.

What Reason is capable of doing, and what this class of men have done, are two distinct and separate things, and should not, therefore, be confounded. The ability of Reason is one thing, and the exercise of Reason by a class of men who were not altogether free from prejudice, passion, superstition, and, in some instances, of most shocking vices, is quite another thing. Reason is by no means implicated in the condemnations of the abuse made of her powers, or of the unfaithfulness to her plainest dictates. Failing to make this distinction, an injustice has not seldom been done to Reason, her rights even sacrificed, and the cause of truth made to suffer deplorable injury.

No hostile feelings actuate us towards philosophy, for, after Theology, philosophy is the noblest occupation of man's intellectual powers. But our interest and affection for the cause of truth is above all others, and we cannot but acknowledge

that one of the most humiliating pages of man's intellectual history is that of philosophy. When we read this page, it would seem that this class of men, instead of bending all their efforts to strengthen and support the primary and universal convictions of mankind, have somehow done their utmost to unsettle and overthrow their everlasting foundations. And do not, candid reader, the foregoing pages on philosophy fully confirm the truth of this remark?

How many of the ancient and modern philosophers employed Reason as a cloak to conceal their vanity, pride, or ambition? How many, under the pretext of friendship for Reason, exaggerated her powers, and became the demagogues of Reason? How many made Reason their slave, so that to use the language of Cicero, "there is no absurdity, however great, in defence of which you will not find some one of the philosophers who has prostituted the powers of Reason." "Religion and morality they never cared for to any part of the extent of their religious and moral natural abilities. These have been uniformly sacrificed in a vain endeavor to appease the disordered cravings that right Reason and Free-Will, assisted as they always are, should have struggled to restrain and overcome." *

* Dr. Manahan.

Let it be clearly understood, then, that what we blame and deprecate in the class of men called philosophers, is not Reason, but the want of it ; not the exercise of Reason, but the neglect of its exercise ; not the use of Reason, but its wilful abuse. "They detained the truth of God in injustice :"—to use the strong language of the Apostle of the Gentiles. "Because they knew God, but did not glorify Him as God, or give thanks ; but became vain in their thoughts, their foolish hearts were darkened. For professing themselves to be wise they became fools. And they changed the glory of the incorruptible God, into the likeness of the image of a corruptible man, and of birds and of four-footed beasts, and of creeping things . . . They changed the truth of God into a lie ; and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever . . And as they liked not God in their knowledge, God delivered them up to a reprobate sense, to do those things which are not convenient." *

Let not the friends of Reason, then, be dismayed, or fearful that in casting off the false and vain speculations of philosophers, Reason thereby is in any way condemned or depreciated. On the contrary, it is in the august name of Reason that we

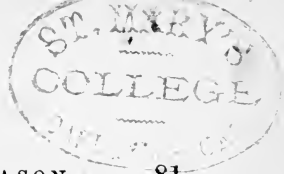
* Rom. c. 1.

declare that both ancient and modern philosophy have failed in a most decided, not to say shameful manner, to meet the great questions which agitate the human mind. It is by the light of Reason, and on its authority, we are bold to give our deliberate and emphatic decision against their speculations as the fruits of a fair, impartial, and faithful exercise of its powers.

Every lofty thought of man's intelligence and every noble impulse of the soul, revolt at the idea of accepting philosophy with its lifeless abstractions, and its dry and dreary speculations, as satisfactory answers to the earnest and solemn demands of Reason. This would be to dry up our noblest aspirations, to palsy our holiest affections, and spread desolation throughout the soul.

The idea of others, that men should wait for the solutions of the great problems of their existence until philosophy has accomplished the task, is so preposterous, that it requires an enormous amount of credulity to entertain it for a single moment ; and it exacts an incredible effrontery to put it forth in the face of the history of philosophy.

"Assuredly," says one, who ought to know, "the circle of incertitudes has been enlarged, new questions have been added to those which philosophy agitated at her cradle ; but the new-comers



have had no better fortune than the ancients. Take any philosophical question ; note the day on which the first systems to give it a solution arose ; compare those systems with those of to-day, which dispute the honor to decide it ; you will find, doubtless, greater perfection and development in the latter, but you will see that their probability is not varied. If each one taken separately is the strongest, the equilibrium between them is the same ; and their progress, far from resulting in the solution of the question, has only consecrated in a more precise and more scientific manner, its incertitude. So that, if one asks philosophy what it has done since its existence, it can answer, that it has given birth, and brought to a greater and greater perfection, systems which can aspire to the honor to solve it ; but that she has not solved one of these questions. Behold, then, what philosophy cannot say, because, if she said it, she would be forced to find examples, one at least,—that is to say, to disinter a philosophical question which has been definitely solved, as a crowd of questions of physics and chemistry, and this example she will not find, because it does not exist. And nevertheless these questions, Pythagoras and Democritus, Aristotle and Plato, Zeno and Epicurus, Bacon and Descartes, Leibnitz, Malebranche, Locke and Kant,

have examined and discussed. It is not the fault of genius that they have not been solved. What is there in philosophy that has rendered all this genius helpless? Whence comes it that a science stirred by such powerful hands, remains eternally barren? There, is the problem in which all the future of philosophy is placed, and so long as it is not solved, one is confounded that distinguished minds venture still to cultivate a science so much cultivated, discuss those questions so much discussed; as if, after the shipwreck of such great men, any intelligence, before discovering the rock on which they split, can flatter itself to be more skilful or more fortunate, and to arrive at the port which escaped them.” *

After such an explicit and frank admission of the inadequateness of philosophy—to tell men to wait for the solutions of the great questions of their existence until they are solved by philosophers, this is, indeed, to prate nonsense, insincerity and sham; this is mockery and delusion.

Accordingly, the pages of history prove, prove convincingly, that no one man or body of men, or nation, however great, learned, or civilized, succeeded with philosophy in establishing a Religion which answered satisfactorily the demands of Reason.

* Jouffroy, *Nouveaux Melanges Philos.* p. 90-93.

But who now will satisfactorily answer the demands of Reason? Six thousand years have passed on, and no man, or body or class of men, has yet been equal to the task. And what does this fact practically indicate? It is a practical indication, in the plainest way possible, that man needs a guide greater than himself, to open to him the path to the realization of his sublime destiny. It indicates that no one but the great Author of man's existence is competent to solve satisfactorily the great question of Reason, and to teach him the way of accomplishing the great purpose of his existence. It indicates that man is endowed with the capacity which is susceptible of receiving a light superior to that of which he is in possession. And is not this to assert the nobility of man's origin, the dignity of his nature, and the grandeur of his destiny? Is not this the crowning of Reason with a diadem of divine brilliancy, splendor and beauty?

Let us, however, adjourn, and discuss this all-important question at the tribunal of the whole human race. For the constant and unanimous testimony of the spontaneous belief of mankind claims our homage and exacts our assent.

XIII.

Admissions.

“Excuse me! in these olden pages
We catch the spirit of the by-gone ages—
We see what wisest men before our day have thought.”

GOETHE.

MAN, from the very cradle of his history, and every where, and throughout the course of time, acknowledged the necessity, and looked up to heaven above for the light to solve the dark enigmas connected with his present existence. No class of individuals have borne more emphatic testimony to the truth of the above statement, and made more explicit avowals of this need, than the philosophers both ancient and modern. It will not be uninteresting to listen awhile to their confessions on this point.

From the beginning, Truth was regarded, not as a product of the earth, or the creation of man, but as a gift of Heaven. Thus Zoroaster says : " The Truth is not a plant of this earth."

Socrates tells Alcibiades, who was about to offer up sacrifice, and at the same time was in great perplexity and fear about the way to pray to the divinity : " It seems to me necessary for us to wait until some one comes to instruct us how we ought to conduct ourselves towards God and men. Until this comes to pass, it were better that you should defer your offering, not knowing whether it will be pleasing, or a source of displeasure to God." *

And in speaking of the immortality of the soul, he says in *Phaedon* : " The Sage in this matter should hold what appears to him the most probable, unless he has a surer light, or the word of God himself for his guide to show him the way."

Plato does not differ from his master on this subject. In *Epinomede*, advising a legislator never to meddle with religious matters, he gives his reason for this advice by saying : " Because it is not possible for mortals to arrive at any thing certain in such matters." In the fifth book of *Laws* he counsels to consult the oracles touching

* 2d Dialog. *Alciab.*

the worship of the gods, "because we of ourselves know nothing concerning this subject."

Cicero, to pass to the Romans, in his *Tusculan Questions*, in resuming the different opinions of philosophers, confesses that a divine light is necessary to discover which of them is the true one. "It would require," such is his language, "a god to decide which of their opinions is the true one."

Jamblichus, in his life of Pythagoras, says that "Man is obliged to do what is agreeable to God ; but," he avows, "that it is not easy to discover this unless one has learnt it from God himself, or from the *Genii*, or from one who has been enlightened by a divine light." Equally explicit, and to the point, is his acknowledgment in his book of mysteries : "It is impossible," he says, "to speak rightly of the gods unless they themselves instruct us."

"No man," says Seneca, "is in condition to help himself ; some one above him must stretch forth his hand to raise him up." *

"According to Proclus : "We shall never learn what regards the Divinity unless we are enlightened by a divine light from heaven." †

Julian avows that "we should regard one as a pure intelligence, or rather as a god than a man,

* *Epis.* 52.

† In *Platon*, *Theol.* c. 1.

who should possess the knowledge of the nature of God." *

Xenophon in his *Memorab. Socrat.*, lib. 4 ; Plutarch in his treatise on Isis and Osiris ; Marcus Aurelius Antoninus at the end of his *Moral Reflections*, Vol. I. ; in a word, all the great philosophers of the ancient world, agree with Socrates and Plato, that the great enigmas of life can only be solved by the aid of a special light from heaven.

It is therefore on the plain, positive, and unimpeachable testimony of the philosophers themselves, that we are furnished the basis of the affirmation of the need of a light superior to that of Reason to answer its own demands.

If our modern philosophers have not made the same frank and candid avowals, it is not to be attributed to their superiority of genius over the ancients, or their philosophical discoveries, but to their lack of a disinterested love for truth and genuine science.

We have, however, seen the insufficiency of modern philosophy to satisfy the demands of Reason, and this to every one who would be loyal to his Reason, and who would not give up his soul, speaks a language louder and easier of interpretation than words.

* Letter to Thennis.

The more noble-minded and loyal souls among these, even, gave vent to the complaints of Reason, and the cry of conscience that the efforts and results of philosophy are not satisfactory. We have only to remind the reader of the frank and candid confessions of the distinguished pupil of V. Cousin, M. Jouffroy, and the avowals of Hegel's disciple Heine, in the foregoing pages.

No less candid, mournful, and sincere are the confessions of Schiller the poet. Schiller, at an early period of his life, devoted himself, with all his ardor and enthusiasm, to the study of philosophy. We have the whole history of this period of his life told in a song entitled

THE PILGRIM!

Life's first beams were bright around me,
 When I left my father's cot,
 Breaking every tie that bound me
 To the dear and hallowed spot.

Childish hopes and youthful pleasures,
 Freely I renounced them all;
 Went in quest of nobler treasures,
 Trusting to a higher call.

For to me a voice had spoken,
 And a spirit seemed to say:
 Wander forth; the path is broken;
 Yonder, eastward, lies the way.

Rest not, till a golden portal
Thou hast reached ;—there enter in :
And what thou hast procured as mortal,
There immortal life shall win.

Evening came, and morn succeeded ;
On I sped, and never tired ;
Cold, nor heat, nor storm, I heeded ;
Boundless hope my soul inspired.

Giant cliffs rose up before me ;
Horrid wilds around me lay ;
O'er the cliffs my spirit bore me ;
Through the wilds I forced my way.

Came to where a mighty river
Eastward rolled its sullen tide ;
Forth I launched with bold endeavor,—
“ Pilgrim stream, be thou my guide ! ”

It hath brought me to the ocean :
Now, upon the wide, wide sea,
Where's the land of my devotion ?
What I seek seems still to flee.

Woe is me ! no path leads hither ;
Earth's horizon still retreats ;
Yonder never will come hither,
Sea and sky will never meet.

Philosophy, by its glowing promises, excited
in the bosom of Schiller what it had done in
Jouffroy, “ boundless hopes ; ” they both pursued

it with all the devotion and courage of youth, and the results in both cases were the same—they were left on a trackless beach, with a vague, hopeless, boundless sea before.

We may add to these, the testimony of one of our own countrymen, whose authority in such matters is preëminent, and extends abroad.

“This question, how to worship God, is the question of questions. It is terrible to feel that Reason imposes an obligation which it cannot instruct us how to fulfil, to find ourselves with broad conceptions which we know not how to realize, with a sense of duty hanging over us which we cannot practically fulfil, and to hesitate between probabilities, to balance between uncertainties, to find the darkness increase as we advance, and finally to lose ourselves in doubt and bewilderment. Reason herself, if exercised, is sufficient to compel the soul to ask this fearful question, but what is and must be our condition, if we ask this question, and hear no answer but echo mocking us in the distance ?

“Every man abandoned to nature and the guidance of natural reason alone, does and must find himself in this situation, the most painful, the most terrible, that can be imagined. It is certain that, in this situation, unless God helps

us, there is no help for us ; unless he points out the way of deliverance, there are no means of our restoration, and no chance of our worshipping him as Reason declares we are bound to worship him, or to gain the end, the good, to which we are appointed.

“Are we, however, left in this condition ? Has not God, in fact, had compassion on us, and has he not made a revelation of his mercy ? Has he not made it possible for us to render him the worship which is his due, and to attain to the good which he originally intended us ? These are important questions. If they can be answered in the affirmative, there is hope for man ; his face may resume the smile of gladness, and a well of joy may spring up in his heart. If not, there is nothing for us but the blackness of despair, un-failing sorrow and ceaseless remorse.” *

We have another striking evidence, and a practical acknowledgment of the need of our receiving light from a higher source to meet the demands of Reason. What other rational explanation can be given to the recourse in ancient times to the practice of Theurgy, Magic, Astrology, Horoscopes, Omens, Divinations, etc., and in our day to the practice of Magnetism, Somnam-

* Brownson. Review. 1848.

bulism, Table-Tipping, and other species of Necromancy, than the working of a mysterious instinct of our nature to seek for help to solve the enigmas of life and its future destiny. Is not this an open confession to all who have not closed up their ears, and shut the doors of their understanding, that Reason herself, if unswayed, leads man to look beyond her bounds, for the light which is needed to answer the questions which torment her? He therefore is not the friend of Reason, who, under the pretext of her defence, would stifle these common instincts of our nature, and close her eyes against the light of heaven.

XIV.

Testimony.

“From God we come; with awe
From God those truths ideal draw
That mock the senses’ ken.”

DE VERE.

THE dictates of Reason, the admissions of both ancient and modern philosophers, show the need of a divine light to direct man to his sublime destiny. This is also confirmed by the voice of humanity, for the unanimous belief of the race testifies that Religion takes its origin from the fact of a Divine communication from heaven. The religious history of all nations, peoples and tribes, confirms this statement. This universal and spontaneous belief of the human race must be regarded by all reasonable minds as having its foundations in truth.

A volume might easily be filled with testimony in favor of this common belief of mankind ; we, however shall content ourselves with bringing forward sufficient proof to put it beyond a reasonable doubt.

“ The ancients,” such is the testimony of Socrates, “ were better than we, and nearer the gods ; they have transmitted to us the sublime knowledge which they received from them . . . to abandon their opinions is to go astray.” *

Plato affirms that “ It behooves us to believe without any opposition what the ancients have transmitted to us concerning the things which regard religion.” And the reason for this is,—“ Because the first men, coming immediately from the hands of the gods, must have known best concerning this matter, and we ought to believe their testimony.” † In his works on Politics, speaking of the primitive age, he says : “ God himself nourished men, and was their shepherd, as man now, a divine creature, feeds the lower animals.”

On this point Aristotle agrees with his master Plato. “ Do you desire to discover the truth,” says Aristotle, “ with certitude ; then separate with care what is of primitive origin, and hold that ; it is that, in truth, which is the original

* Phileb.

† Timeo.

dogma, which can come surely from no other source than God's own word." *

Cicero says the same thing. "There was," such is his language, "there was primitively a society of Reason with God." †

Again, in the Tuseulan Questions, he says : "The Laws of the Twelve Tables ordain that we should hold the religion of our ancestors ; and that, because they were nearer to the gods ; and hence religion in this wise was guaranteed to man as a divine institution."

The Stoic, Marcus Aurelius, in his first book, and the later Neo-Platonists, acknowledge that religion is an inspiration, a gift of the gods.

The primitive communication of God with men, the age of innocence and happiness, is found on almost every page of the poets of Greece and Rome, under the image of the Golden Age—

"That fair age of which the poets tell,
Ere yet the winds grew keen with frost, or fire
Fell with the rains, or spouted from the hills,
To blast thy greenness, while the virgin night
Was guiltless and salubrious as the day." ‡

* Metaph. xvii. c. viii.

† De leg. lib. i. c. vii.

‡ Earth, by Bryant. See Virgil, Georg., lib. 1. Juvenal, Satyra vi. Ovid, Metamorphosis, lib. 1. The same traditions are found among the Persians; see Plutarch on Isis and Osiris; and other nations.

Even Volney, in bringing together the different kinds of religious belief of mankind, in one point makes them all agree, and that is, their doctrines had for their basis a divine communication from heaven.

“The various groups,” he says, “having taken their places . . . Then, by order of position, the first standard on the left was allowed to speak.

“You are not permitted to doubt,” said their chiefs, “that our doctrine is the only true and infallible one. First, it is revealed by God himself.”

“So is ours,” cried *all* the other standards, “and you are not permitted to doubt it.” *

No one will contest the value and authority of the Bible as an historical document, especially when all other historical records agree with the events which it narrates. The only difference between the Traditions above, and those recorded in the Scriptures is, that the latter are more clear, more authentic, and more consonant with enlightened Reason.

In Genesis we are told that “God created man in his own image and likeness, and walked with him in the cool of the day.”

But we have a more ample account of this

* Ruins. c. xxi.

period in the Book of Ecclesiasticus. There we are told—

“God created man of the earth, and made him after his own image . . . He created of him a helpmate like to himself: he gave them counsel, and a tongue, and eyes, and ears, and a heart to devise; and he filled them with knowledge and understanding. He created in them the science of the spirit, he filled their heart with wisdom, and showed them both good and evil. He set his eyes upon their hearts to show them the greatness of his works; that they might praise the name he hath sanctified, and glory in his wondrous works; that they might declare the glorious things of his works. Moreover, he gave them instructions and the law of life for an inheritance. He made an everlasting covenant with them, and he showed them his justice and judgments. And their eyes saw the majesty of his glory, and their ears heard his glorious voice, and he said to them: Beware of all iniquity. And he gave to every one commandment concerning his neighbor.” *

In this account of man's primitive condition we have the original of those more or less obscure traditions of all peoples, of which the ancient bards, poets, and sibyls sung, and which humanity never once doubted.

* Ecclus. xvii.

The results of the labors of all past philosophy, the aspirations of Reason, confirmed by the admissions of ancient and modern philosophers, the spontaneous voice of humanity, form one concert to proclaim the great need of a special light from heaven to solve the dark problems of man's existence, and to point out the way to the accomplishment of his divine destiny.

XV.

Agreement.

“Raise thou up thy head; for know
Time is not now for slow suspense. Behold
That way, an angel hastening towards us.”—DANTE.

PHILOSOPHY, both ancient and modern, having proved insufficient, and the dictates of Reason, the admissions of philosophers, and the history of all religious beliefs, pointing us upward to look for the light needed to solve the dark enigmas of our existence, what are we to do? What is our duty? Somewhere it must exist, for surely God has not brought us unto darkness.

Not to advance when Reason and the spontaneous belief of the race point out the way, would be to yield up our manhood and our humanity. Onward! in obedience to our holiest instincts, looking heavenward for the light to solve the mys-

teries of our being and existence ! For what is there more natural than for the creature to look up to its Creator, like a child to its mother, for the solution of the enigmas which torment it. On the other hand, can one conceive of an act of an intelligent creature more irrational than to refuse belief to the voice of his Creator ? We, for our part, are unable to appreciate the feeling of those who seem to have a certain dread in trusting the great Author and Sustainer of their being.

This trust or belief lies back of all our intellectual knowledge. For, to know any thing, we must trust the certitude of the operations of our senses, faculties, and powers. No thought, no sentiment, no action can take place unless preceded by this belief. This principle we endeavored to establish in the second chapter.

But on the very same grounds that we believe in the testimony of our own faculties, we are also bound to believe in the testimony of other men. For Reason is one and equal in its authority. If this be so, that man, by the very law of his existence, is obliged to believe in the testimony of his own faculties, and those of other men, how much more is he bound, and how much more readily ought he, to believe God, who is truth itself, and the Author of his being, when He speaks ?

Few men have so perverted their intellectual powers, or are sunk so low in the scale of moral existence, as to be guilty of refusing belief to their Creator and God. Should there be one who is guilty of this crime, how can he trust the testimony of his own faculties which are the work of God's own hands? If the Creator himself can deceive us, his creations, surely, cannot be more trustworthy.

Consequently, we believe the testimony of our faculties, because it is repugnant to right Reason to think that God should create a being whose faculties in their normal state should deceive him. And we believe God because the spontaneous impulses of our nature lead us to confide in Him as our Creator, and as the source of all truth, who cannot deceive or be deceived. Primarily our belief is in God, and this belief is the starting point and end of all knowledge.

The pretension of others, who profess to believe only what they comprehend, is the promulgation of a patent absurdity. Belief and comprehension are different operations of our faculties, and it is no mark of intelligence to confound them.

Do these professors know what it means to exclude from the mind that which lies beyond our powers of comprehension? Do they know that

the moment a man makes this the rule of his thoughts, he must, if he would be consistent, deny his own existence, Reason, creation, and God's existence? Thus this lofty pretension of non-belief ends in a manifest absurdity.

For where is there a man who comprehends man, creation, God? Where is there a man who comprehends what it is to see, feel, hear, or think? Where is there a philosopher who can explain the simplest movement of his own body? Why, the smallest grain of sand that he treads under his foot, the meanest blade of grass that he passes unnoticed, the feeblest tone that is wafted on the winds, present to the mind of man mysteries as incomprehensible as the unfathomable Godhead. There is not in this wide universe any thing which is not in some one or more of its bearings beyond the utmost reach of our comprehension. To start then from the principle to exclude all from the mind which we do not comprehend, is to believe nothing, to know nothing, to love nothing, and to do nothing. For believing is before all knowing, all loving, all doing.

He who professes, therefore, to exclude from his mind all that he cannot comprehend, is no friend but the foe and tyrant of Reason; for belief is one of the essential and legitimate results of the exercise of Reason.

And, after all, these pretended non-believers believe in their way as strongly as other men. They are not able to help themselves. They believe in their senses ; for they eat, and drink, and love good cheer ; they believe in money, station, and the gratification of their instincts and passions. But on account of a systematic perversion or deficiency of the higher faculties of the soul, they would, under the pretext of rationality, have men think that their non-belief is a mark of superior intellect and wisdom ! This reasoning reminds us of *Æsop's* fable of the fox, who, being caught in a trap, had his tail cut off. Our readers will remember the rest of the story. So these men would have us believe that their defect is an ornament to be coveted.

Every integral intelligent thinker cannot but regard the man who refuses his belief to truths which come to him with rational evidence, simply because they are beyond the reach of his comprehension, for as great a simpleton as an astronomer who should deny the existence of the planets lying beyond the reach of his sight, because they are only discovered by means of the telescope.

Another class of men are prepared to welcome and accept all light and all truth, come from what quarter it may ; but they are not ready to accept

or admit any truth hostile to the plain dictates of Reason, or that rests not on a rational and sufficient basis. So speaks our "Earnest Seeker."

This is the statement of a sound and just mind, and all that can be required of men of this class is to act consistently and fearlessly on their own principles. For light cannot contradict light ; truth cannot contradict truth ; nor does it matter of what orders these may be. Light and truth are like the blue heavens and the wide ocean, all of one piece, and blend and join together in mutual intercourse. We may rest assured, therefore, if God affords to man the light to explain the enigmas of life, or makes known to him any new truth, these will be in accordance with the light of Reason, and in harmony with the truths he has already knowledge of.

Is it not the height of absurdity to suppose that there can be any opposition betwixt the light of heaven and the light of Reason ? or contradiction between the truth and the dictates of Reason ? Truth in contradiction with the very faculty to which it is addressed ! Truth hostile to that faculty whose natural function is to welcome, assent, and embrace it ! This is ridiculous nonsense. For the light of heaven to one deprived of the light of Reason would be of no more utility

than the light of the sun to a man stark blind. Truth, without the dictates of Reason, would be like a tree without soil. When will men open their eyes and learn that the voice of Heaven, the voice of Reason, and the voice of the vast universe, form in concert a hymn of praise to God who is their origin and final cause.

But does not the belief in what lies beyond our comprehension, in a word religious belief, as it is called, when once admitted, set aside Reason, limit its exercise, and tend to stultify it ?

A little indulgence, generous reader ; after the exposition of this mistake, we will advance on a clear and unobstructed path to our purpose.

Would it not be extremely silly to suppose that the acceptance of the additional knowledge of the wonders of the heavens, gained by powerful instruments, would lead one to set aside the organ of sight by which this knowledge was obtained ? Would it not be equally foolish and absurd to suppose, that because astronomers have discovered other and larger luminous bodies in the heavens than the sun, therefore the exercise of our unaided sight is thereby limited, its powers contracted, and rendered useless ? It is no less absurd and ridiculous to suppose that the additional light and truths gained by virtue of a

reasonable belief, set aside Reason, limit its exercise, and tend to stultify it. On the contrary, every new truth that is made known to Reason, calls forth its exercise, sheds additional light on the truths already known, makes them better understood, and causes the mind to hold them more steadfastly; and is not this upholding Reason, and giving to it a new splendor and an increasing beauty?

The man therefore who believes, who possesses a reasonable belief, exercises his Reason. No one more so. No one so much so. He exercises the faculties of Reason in a higher, wider, more sublime sphere than the man of non-belief. For

“Belief is a higher faculty of Reason

* * * * *

As the snow-headed-mountain rises o’er

The lightning, and applies itself to heaven.” *

Reasonable religious belief does not supplant Reason, nor diminish its exercise, but presupposes its activity, extends its boundaries, elevates and ennobles it by applying its powers to the highest order of truth. Accordingly the truths gained by virtue of religious belief, take the deepest root in the heart, and fix themselves most firmly in the mind, and elicit the noblest deeds of self-sacrifice,

* Bailey.

of heroism, and the highest form of martyrdom. Is not this an evident proof of their congeniality with human nature, their elevating power, and divine origin ?

Surely, then, he who deprives himself of the knowledge of the order of truths made known to us by the exercise of a reasonable religious belief, voluntarily condemns himself to live on a lower range of thought and feeling, is false to his holiest instincts, and is the author of his own degradation.

The purpose then of true Religion is to open to the eye of Reason its divine origin, to elevate it to the plane of its glorious destiny, and consecrate all the powers of the soul to its realization.

The aim of Religion is to meet the lofty aspirations of Reason, and answer the infinite longings of our nature. Let us then not refuse the light of heaven. Let us be loyal to Reason, and raise up Human Nature to its divine grandeur.

XVI.

Whither?

"But ah, with the best will, I see already
No peace will well up in me, clear and steady.
But why must hope so soon deceive us,
And the dried-up stream in fever leave us?
For in this I have had a full probation;
And yet for this want a supply is provided,
To a higher than earth the soul is guided,
We are ready and yearn for revelation."

GOETHE'S FAUST.

WE cannot but consider it an insult to the common sense of our readers, for us to attempt to carry them back to the ancient religions of Egypt, Greece, Rome or India, for the needed light of heaven, to answer to the aspirations of Reason and the spontaneous belief of humanity. Marcus Varro, Celsus, Julian, the schools of Alexandria, and a thousand other efforts have been made

to restore their worship, but all was in vain. And
now

“None
Are left to teach their worship. The fires
Of sacrifice are chilled, and the green moss
O’ercreeps their altars ; the fallen images
Cumber the weedy courts, and for loud hymns,
Chanted by kneeling multitudes, the wind
Shrieks in the solitary aisles.” *

Nor have the less ancient religious beliefs of Arabia, Gaul, the British Isles, or those of the savages of America or Australia, claims sufficient to engage our serious attention. The glance we already bestowed on some of the more intelligent forms of these beliefs, ought to be sufficiently convincing for candid minds, if the common convictions of civilized society did not suffice, to acknowledge their utter and complete insufficiency.

There are a few, here and elsewhere, who for a time seem interested in the writings of the Persian, Chinese, and Indian sages and philosophers. These researches we cannot but regard as an intellectual amusement, rather than a single-hearted and earnest search after truth. In those who are not led by the novelty of the thing, it may be an attempt to shirk, or escape, the con-

* Bryant.

victions and responsibilities which the dawning truth foreshadows.

Surely, in any case, it is to run athwart the enlightened and cherished convictions of civilized society, to look for, or expect, a complete or satisfactory solution of the great and solemn questions which agitate Reason, and press on our attention, outside of Christianity. Any other hope or effort, is to tamper with conscience, to trample upon our moral sentiments, and to stultify our intelligence. We cannot therefore respect ourselves, or be loyal to the laws of our intellectual being, and look with sincerity for a religion commensurate with the demands of Reason and the wants of our nature, except it be in Christianity.

There are others who tell us to look to the future. They speak of the "Religion of the Future;" "The Church of the Future." Now the idea of forming or inventing a Religion at this period of the world's history, is as absurd as to tell one who is already famishing for bread, that he must wait till wheat be sown, till rain falls, the harvest ripens and is gathered, the grain be ground, and the flour be made into bread;—too absurd for any not bereft of their proper senses to entertain.

"Every day," says a modern author, "we

hear the future religion of mankind announced ; if they cannot produce it, at least they prophecy its coming. They transform powerlessness into hope. But mankind has no time to spend in waiting ; it desires God for to-day, and not for to-morrow. It has hungered and thirsted after God for six thousand years ; and you appearing so late, when you set yourselves about the work of providing for wants so deeply felt, for aspirations which centuries have not weakened, you are still reduced to prophecies ! For me, all that does not furnish humanity with its daily bread, I do not believe in. I believe God has been the father from the beginning of the soul as well as of the body ; I believe that the harvests are all come, that the rain has fallen ; that, in the order of truth, as in the order of nature, man not only hungers, but is also satisfied when he wills it. The bread is ready ; God has kneaded it with his own hands ; that which is wanting is the will to take it as God has prepared it. Men prefer to prepare it according to their own tastes ; they ask from Reason what Reason is unable to give them."

The idea then of forming or waiting for a new religion is a flat denial of God's providence ; and a mere subterfuge of a certain class of men to escape the claims of truth. Comte reveals their

secret when he says that "The Religion of the Future is no religion."

If, therefore, we are to have a Religion calculated for man's true happiness, one that can give satisfactory solutions to the enigmas of life, and present to us a pure worship acceptable to God, it is to be found in Christianity, or to be looked upon as a phantom of despair !

But what is Christianity ? The answer to this important question is not so clear, for Christianity is not one, but divided. Divided, however, so far as we are at present concerned, into two great parties. The answer, therefore, to the question, What is Christianity ? is twofold.

The first division of Christianity, and the one which bespeaks our earliest attention, because it promises to be more favorable to our demands and more in accordance with our sentiments ; the one of our childhood and education ; the one which claims to have emancipated the human thought, broken the chains that shackled man's free activity, and opened up to him the true pathway to his glorious destiny—need we name it—it is the religion which broke forth in the Reformation of the sixteenth century ;—the Religion of Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, Knox, Cranmer, Fox and Wesley—*Protestant Christianity*.

Surely we shall not fail to meet with entire and perfect success, when we ask, what do these great lights of the Reformation teach in regard to the nature and dignity of man's Reason, its rights and value, its liberty and independence? Has not Protestantism emancipated human Reason? consecrated its sovereignty? asserted man's freedom? upheld the dignity of human nature? Has it not restored to man a reasonable worship, one acceptable to God, and in accordance with man's intelligence and moral feelings? Surely it has done all this, and much more of the same nature, and to ask such questions in our enlightened day is to acknowledge oneself behind the times, uninformed of the commonest events, unacquainted with modern literature and the common language of civilized society. The merest schoolboy is prepared to answer questions such as these without a moment's hesitation. Our task is an easy one. The result can but be favorable to the cause of genuine Protestant religion.

It is well for us to remember, however, that our "Earnest Seeker" at the outset resolved to repudiate all creeds and systems of belief which were found contradicting the plain dictates of Reason, or the clear convictions of conscience. He was fully determined to discard a religion

which should demand in any respect the sacrifice of Reason, or whose doctrines should tend to disparage this noble gift of heaven. He was also firmly determined not to suffer any religious belief to trample upon, or to mutilate, or to destroy, the integrity and dignity of human nature. This was his starting point. These were his principles, and are these not those of every intelligent mind and thinker?

How now does the religion of the great Reformation meet this appreciation of Reason? Does it harmonize with these convictions? Does it look to Reason as the guide of man to truth? appeal to it for its approbation? seek to convince it of the truth by affording clear and rational arguments? Does it give to the enigmas of Reason a clear and reasonable solution? Does it uphold the free and lawful exercise of Reason, and the dignity of Human Nature? Or does Protestantism repudiate Reason, trample upon the convictions of conscience, and endeavor to mutilate and abase man's nature?

To be just, frank, and unbiassed, we must examine the Protestant Religion in its sources, follow it through to its legitimate consequences, and look at it in its practical results.

This all-important inquiry shall begin with the following chapter.

PROTESTANTISM.

XVII.

Reason.

"The Reformation is the consecration of the sovereignty of the individual Reason."—GURZOR.

"**L**UTHER is the key of the Reformation," * so we are told on the high authority of the historian of the Protestant Religion. Let us employ this key to unlock the precious treasures of that powerful movement which changed, in a measure, the Christian belief of sixteen centuries.

What then did Dr. Martin Luther teach concerning the nature and dignity of human Reason ; —the light which is given to every man who cometh into the world as his guide and instrument in the discovery of Truth ? Let us interrogate and listen to the teaching of the oracle of the Religion of the Reformation. What does he think of man ?

* D'Aubigney.

“If you wish to define man rightly,” he tells us, “you may say that he is a rational animal, endowed with reason and possessing a heart, which are inventive.”

A definition which may pass ; but let us see what are the proper functions of this inventive reason and heart.

“What do these faculties invent ?” he demands. “They invent,” such is his reply, “they invent evil, they invent evil against God, against God’s commandments, against man. Man therefore,” he continues, “is endowed with reason of ceaseless activity. But its activity is always evil and godless.” *

If this be true, were it not better a thousand times, that we had never been endowed with the gift of Reason ? Who would not rather be like those who want discourse of Reason, than to be gifted with the faculty which, with its ceaseless activity, leads us always astray ? Surely such a gift cannot come from a wise and benignant Being, but looks rather like the curse of a wicked and malignant fiend.

This opposition to Reason on the part of the great Reformer, is not the expression of a momentary ebullition of passion, or the flight of a

* 1 B. Moses. Walch i. 875.

sudden but ill-judged piety, which escaped his pen. It was, on the contrary, a fixed and undeviating hostility. Let us see how Luther develops it.

“The Christian revelation,” so he teaches, “rejects clearly all flesh and blood, that is, what is human, and all human Reason, since these certainly are not able to lead us to Christ ! Hence these things are undoubtedly nothing but vain darkness. Yet the High Schools, the schools of the devil, make a great noise, and not only extol the natural right of Reason, but even hold it up as something good, useful, necessary to the knowledge of Christian truth. It is clear that no one beside the High Schools have found this out, except it be the devil himself, in order to overthrow and obscure Christian truth, which alas too often happened.” *

Thus, having established in his own mind an essential antagonism between the natural light of Reason and that of Revelation, he ridicules the idea that the light of the one can be of any service to the other. He says in the same work :

“With the pretty comparison that the divine light sheds its rays upon the natural light of Reason, like the light of the sun on a fine painting,

* Kirchen Postil. xl. 459.

this the Schools have introduced from the teaching of heathens into Christianity. The devil told them to say that. In this manner God's word is trampled under foot ; but, when it comes forth, it knocks all such devilish teachings to powder." *

In the first instance we were told that Reason with its ceaseless activity always leads us to evil and godlessness ; hence it is worthless as a guide or instrument in finding truth ; and secondly, we are instructed that Reason is hostile to Christian truth, its light is nothing but vain darkness, and that God's word knocks its devilish teachings to powder. If the words of Dr. Luther be those of truth, if his teachings be the key of the Reformation, nothing can be more pleasing to God, and no duty is more imperative on one who holds the Protestant faith, than to endeavor to put out the light of Reason, and despise its dictates. Indeed we have the Dr. telling us so in his famous and classical Letters on the Galatians.

"The man of faith," so says the Reformer, "throttles Reason, and says to it : Reason, you are a silly, blind fool. You understand not a farthing's worth. Do not cut up so many pranks with your bellowing opposition, but shut up your mouth, and hold your tongue. Do not pretend to

* Kirchen Postil, p. 599.



REASON.

be the judge of God's word, but quiet yourself, and hear what it tells you, and believe it. In this way the faithful smother the beast, which the whole world could not do, and, by thus doing, they make the most pleasant offering and sacrifice that can be given to our Lord God." *

The destruction of Reason is not only the duty of the followers of this champion of true Christianity, but its destruction must necessarily precede Christian faith. He answers those who hold that Reason is one of the necessary conditions of faith, in the following manner :

"Children on the very account that they have not Reason, can and do believe more perfectly ; since Reason goes straight against belief. We ought therefore to let Reason slide. Reason must be killed and buried in faith. You say Reason is a light to faith, that it should enlighten faith where it should go ; yes, in my judgment, Reason sheds light, like a piece of dirt in a lantern. It is Christ's will that if we would enter the kingdom of heaven we should become little children, that is, as children are wanting all Reason and understanding, so Reason should be destroyed in all Christians, otherwise faith has no place in them, for Reason fights against faith." †

* Walch v. iii p. 2044.

† L. Ungedr. Pred. Bruno. p. 106.

To be a Christian, according to this Gospel, one has to cease to be a rational creature, and become a ninny. This is indeed the consecration of the sovereignty of individual Reason with a vengeance ! Such a Gospel would find better material to work upon, and for its free and full development, among the beasts who want discourse of Reason, than among intelligent beings. It would find readier success among baboons, ourang-outangs, and other tribes of monkeys, than among a thinking and a reasoning people, for in the monkeys there is no need of the preparation work of the demolition of Reason to make way for faith ; this kind of faith could take root at once !

Why in the name of common sense are we told and told again to “read the Bible,” to “search the Scriptures,” if we are not to use our Reason, if the destruction of Reason is the condition of faith ? Oh it is a pity that that “most blessed discovery of an old Latin Bible which Luther found in Erfurt Library” was not read to a better purpose ! Pity it did not shed a brighter light in the Reformer’s soul than to teach him to disparage and despise God’s noblest gift to man,—Reason !

But listen once more to this great German, whose followers pretend that he emancipated the human mind,—Reason :

“ You must come to this point,” he says, “ or it is all over with you ; you must strip yourselves of Reason altogether, and through faith throw it away ; it is this word faith which gives eternal life. Moreover, he that would hear the word of Christ, let him leave the Jackass Reason at home, and neither be guided, nor judge according to Reason ; if he does so, he irritates Christ.” *

Is it to be wondered at, when men discover that the only way to religious belief is by repudiating Reason, and by trampling under foot its dictates, that they prefer to retain their self-respect and reverence for God, rather than embrace a Religion which outrages both ? “ If Reason in its most decisive judgments on Religion, is unworthy of trust, then Christianity, even natural theology, must be abandoned ; for the existence and veracity of God, and the divine original of Christianity, are conclusions of Reason, and must stand or fall with it. If revelation be at war with this faculty, it subverts itself, for the great question of its truth is left by God to be decided at the bar of Reason. It is worthy of remark, how nearly the bigot and the skeptic approach. Both would annihilate our confidence in our faculties, and both throw doubt and confusion over every truth. We honor reve-

* Ausleg. Ev. Johan. vii. 2160.

lation too highly to make it the antagonist of Reason, or to believe that it calls us to renounce our highest powers." *

But did Luther really mean what we have quoted from his writings? Were not these expressions thrown out in the heat of argument, or uttered in sport? Did he renounce thus the authority of Reason, and abandon himself to the mercy of every error and absurdity? Judge by the following. He says :

"That two and five make seven, that I can grasp with my Reason ; but if it should be told me from above, No, two and five make eight, I would believe it against my Reason and feelings. The devil's sole occupation is to get the Romish priests to measure God's will in his works with Reason." †

By this we see that the author of the Reformation was not satisfied with setting aside Reason to make way for what he calls faith ; but even would have us believe what is contradictory to the plainest dictates of Reason. Yet the supposition that any thing can come from above which may contradict Reason, is simply absurd. We may rest assured if any such message comes, it comes not down from above, but up from below

* Dr. Channing. Vol. 3, p. 66.

† Kirch Post. xi. 2308.

And the proper answer to one who should bring such a message would be, "Away, you black imp, and return to the father of lies who sent you!"

Let us close our account with "the key of the Reformation" by a passage taken from his last sermon at Wittemberg, in which he treats the very point in hand, "The relations of human Reason with Revelation."

"Reason is the devil's bride," so says Dr. Luther, "a pretty strumpet, a cursed whore, an outcast, a public prostitute, the greatest whore of the devil; she should be trampled under foot with all her wisdom, she should be murdered, dirt should be thrown in her face to make her hateful, she should be dragged through the privy, the cursed whore with her darkness." *

Is this, candid Reader, the language of one "for whom we, and generations to come, have to be thankful"? † or is it the raving of a madman? Surely his co-reformer Hospinian was not far out of the way when he said: "This man Luther is absolutely mad." Or Zwingle, another co-worker in this pretended liberation of the human mind, when he declared that "The devil has made himself master of Luther."

* Leip. Ausg. xii. 373.

† Carlyle.

If this be the boasted emancipation of human Reason which we have had rung in our ears from our earliest childhood by our fathers, teachers, orators, school books, literature, press, and every other channel of communication, then have we been most grossly imposed upon. Luther the champion of Reason ! Luther the Friend of Progress ! Luther the Liberator of modern thought ! Was there ever such a shame-faced imposition practised upon mankind ? Yet those who plume themselves in being the more enlightened portion of society, have swallowed it in perfect simplicity ! And would have the world believe too that “it is under a lasting debt of gratitude to the German monk of Erfurt !” *

It may be said that these opinions were those of Luther, and not shared by his co-workers in the great Reformation ? But are we not told that “Luther is the key of the Reformation ?” Is it not then through him we are to find the great truths which shed so glorious a light on the world ? Certainly. And if we find any difference in this matter between the key of the Reformation and his followers, it will be not in opinion, but in lack of the same boldness and freedom of expression.

“The Theologian of the Reformation,” as

* Carlyle.

Melancthon was called, let us into the secret of his opinions on this point by showing an antipathy to the very name of Reason. He says : " that it was by the gradual introduction of philosophy in religion, that the most pernicious word Reason began to be used." *

This passage alone would be sufficient to convict Melancthon of holding the same opinions as his master, had we no other proofs. Further on we shall take occasion to show that not only Melancthon, Calvin, etc., condemned Reason and its exercise, but denied to man in his present state, even the possession of the faculty of Reason.

Leibnitz, sensible of the discredit it would throw upon the Protestant religion if it were once admitted that Luther was an enemy to Reason, endeavors to explain away his meaning. Thus Luther in his work, entitled " The Slave-Will," says : " If it pleases thee that God crowns the unworthy, it ought not to displease thee that God condemns the worthy." †

Now Leibnitz, in construing this passage, says : " This reduced to more moderate expressions, means, if you approve that God gives eternal glory to those who are no better than others, you

* Loc. Theol. Augs. 1521, p. 10.

† Ch. 174.

ought not to disapprove that he abandons those who are no worse than others." *

With all due regard to the intellectual gifts of Leibnitz, his friendly interference does not save his fellow-countryman from shocking Reason and outraging the sense of justice. Luther tells us that "God crowns the unworthy." Leibnitz that "God gives eternal glory to those who are no better than others." Who are these "no better than others" of which Leibnitz speaks? Are they worthy of eternal glory? If so, then his proposition is altogether dissimilar to Luther's. Are they unworthy? If so, then he has not helped his friend Luther, but only reiterated his statement. Luther's second proposition is, that "God condemns the worthy." That of Leibnitz is that "God abandons those no worse than others." Who are these "no worse than others" of Leibnitz? Do they deserve condemnation? If so, then his proposition is contrary to Luther's. Are they not deserving condemnation? Then, again, Leibnitz does not escape the charge any less than Luther, of contradicting the dictates of Reason and violating the principles of justice.

"Men may construe things after fashion,
Clean from the purpose of the things themselves."

* Leib. Opera ; Conform. de la foi avec raison.

But it would require a greater philosopher even than Leibnitz to show that the Protestant religion is not unfriendly, hostile, and destructive of man's Reason.

If we wanted proof of the unintellectual character of the Reformation, we have it in the acknowledgment of the distinguished historian and protestant, Guizot. In his history of Civilization of Europe, he says, in speaking of "the religious revolution of the Sixteenth Century," that "it was ignorant of the true principles of intellectual liberty. It did not elevate itself to the first cause, nor descend to the last consequences of its work . . . The Reformation did not fully comprehend and receive its own principles and effects." *

Which means, in other words, that Protestantism, from the point of view of intelligence, was from its commencement a stupid affair, illogical, and an insult to the common sense and Reason of mankind.

* 12 Leçon.

XVIII.

Free-Will.

“Of this be sure,
Where freedom is not, there no virtue is;
If there be none, this world is all a cheat,
And the divine stability of heaven,—
(That assured seat for good men after death,)
Is but a transient cloud, displayed so fair
To cherish virtuous hope, but at our need
Eludes the sense, and fools our honest faith,
Vanishing into a lie.”

CROWE.

WHATEVER man may be, take from him moral freedom and you rob him of his dignity, destroy his conscience, and undermine his responsibility to God, his duty to himself, and to his fellow-men. Deny to man free will and you lower him down in the scale of existence to the beasts which perish, and make a total wreck of the noble structure of his being. Disinherit man of his free agency, and you make him a slave to some foreign,

tyrannical, or despotic power. You make man a machine, a thing without sense, nobility, or grandeur.

But Protestantism cannot surely be charged justly with teaching doctrines of such degrading tendencies. Did not the Reformation awaken the spirit of freedom throughout the world? Were not the Reformers stanch friends of human liberty? Did not the people, when Luther passed through their streets, cry out to this bold and fearless champion, "Free us!" and did he not do it? Did not the Protestant Religion give such a blow to the chains which had fettered the minds of men for ages, that they were shattered for ever in pieces; and thus man restored to his native dignity and heaven-born freedom? Can any doubt exist in intelligent minds of the truth of this?

Let it not weary our readers to pause awhile here, and examine these grand assertions freely. It is not all gold that glitters. And as free inquiry is a part of our birthright, we will use it.

Taking once more "the Key of the Reformation," Dr. Martin Luther, in our hands, let us interrogate his writings concerning the free will of man.

"Man," so says the Doctor, "is like a horse.

Does God leap into the saddle? The horse is obedient, accommodates itself to every movement of the rider, and goes whither he wills it. Does God throw down the reins? Then Satan leaps upon the back of the animal, which bends, goes, and submits to the spurs and caprices of its new rider. The will cannot choose its rider, and cannot kick against the spur that pricks it. It must get on, and its very docility is a disobedience and a sin. The only struggle possible is between the two riders, God and the Devil, who dispute the momentary possession of the steed. And then is fulfilled the saying of the Psalmist: "I am become like a beast of burden." *

In reading this passage one is in doubt whether to break out in bursts of laughter at the ridiculousness and absurdity of such a picture of man, or to give way to bursts of indignation against doctrines which so utterly degrade our nature. If man be the mere passive instrument of God, or the complete slave of the devil, as the case may be, and he has no more to say about it than a horse has to say who shall be his rider, then what have we left to do, but despair, or live in good cheer, and be indifferent. As to the possibility of doing any thing towards realizing the great end

* Op. Luth. tom. 11, p. 1776.

of our existence,—that is out of all question. For this “true great man for whom the whole world and its history was waiting,” * adds that :

“In spiritual and divine things which regard salvation, man is like a statue of salt such as Lot’s wife was changed into. Yes, man is a stock and a stone, a dead statue which has no use of its eyes, mouth, any of its senses, or its heart.” †

To talk after this or that “instinct of liberty,” “nobility of the soul,” “dignity of Human Nature,” and pretend to be a Protestant, a disciple of Luther, is to throw overboard common sense, and to proclaim oneself fanatically absurd. This “great man” is not satisfied with enunciating his doctrine, he employs illustrations that he may be understood, and illustrations of his own kind and classical taste.

“Catch me, in the name and strength of Free Will, a flea or a louse, and kill it,” he says, in reply to Erasmus’ defence of Free Will, “then you will have gained your cause. Then we will come to you and offer up our prayers to this great God of Free Will.” ‡

Is it not mockery to tell us that man is a responsible being, and accountable for all his actions, if this be true? Virtue, self-sacrifice,

* Carlyle.

† In Gen. c. 14.

‡ Wit. Aug. Th. 6, 462.

heroism—these are but empty sounds. This champion of human liberty is not yet done. Listen !

“ Before all,” he says, “ it is necessary and useful for the Christian to know that God foresees nothing in a contingent manner ; but he foresees, proposes, and acts from his eternal and immutable will ; this is the thunderbolt which destroys and overturns Free Will. Let those, then, who come forward as the champions of that doctrine, deny first this thunderbolt. And thus it follows irrefragably, that every human action, although it seems to be done in a contingent manner, and subject to the doctrine of chances, is necessary and irresistible in the order of Providence. Therefore it is not Free Will but necessity which is the acting principle in us.” *

Can we trust our eyes, and ourselves, when doctrines such as these are put forward in an intelligent and Christian community as the teachings of the Gospel, as evangelical Christianity ? They sound more like the ravings of the Grand Turk Mahomet, who with his all-absorbing Pantheism annihilates all human agency. Yet we are told by men who boast of doing their own thinking, that “ Luther was the mighty man

* De Serv. Arb. adv. Eras. t. iii. p. 170.

whose light was to flame as the beacon over long centuries and epochs of the world ! ” *

Not satisfied with the denial of Free Will, Luther would reject it were it offered to him.

“ As for myself,” he says, “ I confess that were Free Will offered to me I would not accept it, nor any other instrument that might aid in my salvation.” †

One would believe that according to the light of Protestantism, the great purpose of Christianity was to make man an abject slave, and to have him hug the chains which fetter his free limbs.

The mild and learned Melancthon held the same hostile opinions, and shared the same feelings of hatred against the doctrine of man’s Free Will.

He stigmatizes it as “ an impious doctrine, introduced into Christianity from the Pagans.” ‡

Like Luther, he denies man’s freedom in toto. He says : “ There is no liberty of our will. All that takes place happens according to a divine predestination.” §

Melancthon had the hardihood even to assert that “ God wrought all things, evil as well as good ; that God was the author of David’s adulte-

* Carlyle’s Heroes.

† Ibid. t. 1. p. 171.

‡ Loc. Theol. Aug. ed. 1821, p. 10.

§ Loc. Theol. Bale, 1521, p. 35.

ry, and the treachery of Judas, as well as of the conversion of Paul—not permissively, but effectually as his own work.” *

But in a subsequent edition of his works he combats this very opinion, and carefully abstains from mentioning that formerly it was his own.

Zwingle asserts the same detestable opinions. He says: “Adultery and murder are one and the same crime, since God is the author, mover, and impeller to sin. . . . God impels the robber to kill the innocent, even though he is unprepared for death.” †

As regards the Genevan Reformer, Calvin, he, in numberless instances, employs the expressions: “Man, at the instigation of God, doeth what it is unlawful to do.” “By a mysterious and divine inspiration, the heart of man turneth to evil.” “Man falleth because the providence of God so ordaineth.” ‡

Let one citation from this coryphæus of predestination suffice. He says: “The reprobate are inexcusable though they cannot avoid the necessity of sinning, and this necessity comes from God. God speaks, but it is in order to render

* Mart. Chemnitz, loc. theol. edit. Leyden, 1615, p. 1, 173.

† De Prov. p. 365-6.

‡ Just. b. iv. c. 18, § 12; b. iii. c. 23, § 8.

them more deaf. He offers to them remedies, but it is in order that they may not be cured.”*

Beza goes so far as to say that God created a portion of men as his instruments, with the intent of working evil through them.”†

We may, however, be told that this is old Protestantism ; modern Protestantism is quite another thing. Not so fast, generous reader ; here we have “ the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church, held in Philadelphia, in the United States of America, in the year of our Lord 1827,” and it discourses in the following strain on these points :

“ Of God’s Eternal Decree. c. iii., 3. iii. By the decree of God for the manifestation of his glory some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death.” Sec. v. “ Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life God hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith and good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving him thereto, and all to the praise of his glorious grace.” Sec. viii. “ The rest of mankind God was pleased, for the glory of his sovereign

* Inst. 1, c. 3, 234.

† Aphor. xxii.

power over his creatures, to pass by, and ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sins, to the praise of his glorious justice."

It would seem in reading what has preceded that the Reformers and their worthy descendants have endeavored to gather together in one body all the doctrines which could shock reason, and outrage those moral feelings implanted in our breast by our Creator, and called them Christianity, Evangelical Christianity !

Nor is the Church of England behind her sister Protestant churches in "Evangelical Christianity." From the thirty-nine Articles and the Homilies, and still more from the persecution of the assertors of Free Will in England, it is clear that the Anglican Church held these doctrines till the end of the reign of James I. In the course of this king's reign there were sent Episcopal representatives from England and Scotland to the great Protestant Synod of Dort. There, in the name of their representative churches, they signed that "the faithful who fall into atrocious crimes do not forfeit justification, or incur damnation."

Does not the seventh of the "Articles of Religion" justify their conduct ? It says :

"Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby, before the foundations of

the world were laid, he hath constantly decreed by his counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them to Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honor."

The Methodists held the same degrading opinions. Charles Wesley shall be our witness. He gives us the following conversation held by himself with one whom he calls "a pillar of the Church, J. W., at Birmingham."

"Do you believe that you have nothing to do with the law? I have not. I am not under the law. I live by faith. Have you, as living by faith, a right to every thing in the world? I have. All is mine since Christ is mine! May you then take any thing you will, any where? Suppose, out of a shop, without the consent of the owner? I may if I want it; for it is mine; only I will not give offence. Have you a right to all the women in the world? Yes, if they consent! And is not that sin? Yes, to him that thinks it a sin; but not to those whose hearts are free." "And Roger Ball of Dublin afterwards affirmed the same thing." *

To make man irresponsible for his actions is

* Southey's Life, v. ii. p. 144

to deny the freedom of the will. The one goes with the other. Alarmed at the results of his preaching, Wesley called a Conference of the leading Methodist preachers, and publicly confessed "that they had leaned too much to Calvinism, and also to Antinomianism. The main pillar of which was that Christ had abolished the moral law, that Christians are under no obligation to observe it, and that a part of Christian liberty was liberty from observing the commandments of God." *

"A separation took place, and the greater part of the Methodist clergy adhered to Lady Huntingdon's party, who was the head of the Calvinists." †

That the founder of Methodism was not behind the early Reformers in his unnatural creed, is made clear from a letter of his to parents on the education of children. He says: "that in particular they should labor to convince them of atheism, and show them that they do not know God, love him, delight in him, or enjoy him, any more than do the beasts that perish." ‡

How one so destitute of all the feelings of our common humanity should be looked up to as almost an inspired teacher of him who said:

* Whitehead, p. 273.

† Southey, p. 179.

‡ Southey, p. 235.

"Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven," is strange, passing strange !

The same sentiments are taught to the little baptized children of the Protestant Episcopal Church in our own day. In the Sunday-school library of one of the Chapels of Trinity Church, we found a volume of "Hymns for Children," containing the following lines :

"Sin is the substance of each thought.
Each word, each deed with sin is fraught.
Your little hearts are all unclean,
And quite the dwelling-place of sin."

The image of God which each one bears in his soul consists chiefly in Reason and Free-Will ; yet here is a religion pretending to be God's religion, and at the same time would rob us of his image, dry up all the generous impulses of the soul, and stifle its noble aspirations ; and make virtue, devotion, love, a mere name, a phantom !

Such is Protestantism in theory, such is Protestantism in practice. Listen to the language of one who felt its soul-destroying influence, and therefore speaks from experience. It is a voice from the once Calvinistic New England.

"Too many think religion a depressing, rather

than an elevating service, that it breaks rather than ennobles the spirit, that it teaches us to cower before an almighty and irresistible Being ; and I must confess, that religion, as it has generally been taught, is any thing but an elevating principle. It has been used to scare the child, and appal the adult. Men have actually been taught to glorify God by flattery, rather than by becoming excellent and glorious themselves, and thus doing honor to their Maker. Our dependence on God has been so taught, as to extinguish the consciousness of our free nature and moral power. Religion, in one or another form, has always been an engine for crushing the human soul. But such is not the religion of Christianity. If it were, it would deserve no respect. We are not, we cannot be bound to prostrate ourselves before a deity, who makes us abject and base. That moral principle within us, which calls us to watch over and perfect our souls, is an inspiration which no teaching can supersede or abolish." *

* Dr. Channing, v. ii. p. 214.

XIX.

Human Nature.

"Digitum erigere peccas."—PERCIUS.

To raise your finger is to sin.

WILLINGLY we would have stopped our investigation on so unpleasant a subject in our last chapter, for it is already sufficiently shown, in our judgment, that Protestantism is inimical to Reason, disinherits man of his liberty, and hence has no claims on intelligent minds, and men who respect themselves. Yet, every body knows that we shall have it proclaimed from pulpits, published in the papers, spoken forth by orators, sung by poets, and written and rewritten by historians until we are sickened at it, that the Protestant Reformation was the dawn of a new light, the advocate of liberty, and the upholder of the dignity of Human Nature.

To keep silence while such falsehoods are proclaimed boldly in our streets and from our house-tops, would be recreant to the cause of truth. The time has come to strip this religion, hostile to our nature, of its garb of light, and show its hidden character to the world.

The two foregoing chapters must have convinced our readers, that one of the cardinal doctrines of Protestantism is that of the utter worthlessness of Human Nature. But as this was not the precise point we had then in hand, we will now devote a few pages bearing directly on it.

“Sin,” so says Dr. Luther, “is not an act or a phenomenon of our nature ; it is our very nature, and our whole being itself.” *

If our nature is in itself wholly depraved, what points of contact can truth, goodness, religion have with it ? How can these touch or affect us in any manner ? How is virtue, religion, morality possible ? For,

“All that you can do,” says the same Luther, “begins in sin, remains in sin ; it may appear ever so good and pretty ; you can do nothing but sin, act as you please.” † Again,

“All that is in our will is evil, all that is in our understanding is only error and blindness.

* Aug. Aug. xi. 2793.

† Walch. Aug. xi. 12.

Therefore, man has, in regard to divine things, nothing else than utter darkness, error, wickedness, perverseness, bad will, and misunderstanding." *

Melancthon takes up the same theme, and says :

"It is sufficient for a Christian to know that all works of nature, all inclinations and endeavors of Human Nature are sins." † Again, "Such is man that by his natural strength he can do nothing but sin. . . . The works which precede justification are all the fruit of the cursed tree, and although they may be examples of the most beautiful virtues, nevertheless they are nothing but deceit and lies." ‡

If this be so, what becomes of the bright examples of virtue of the pagan world, as Aristides, Socrates, Zenocrates, Lucretia, Camillus, and a thousand others ? Listen to "the mild Melancthon," and he will satisfy your curiosity.

"Let it be supposed," he says, "that there was a certain constancy in Socrates, and chastity in Zenocrates, temperance in Zeno, these shadows of virtue dwelt in impure souls, and sprang from self-love and vanity, and ought not to be held for virtues, but looked upon as so many vices." §

* Walch. Ausg. v. 778.

† Loc. Com. de peccato, ed. 1521.

‡ De Just.

§ Ibid.

A celebrated writer, in speaking of the baneful effects of these views, remarks : " Some of the most affectionate tokens of God's love within and around us are obscured by this gloomy theology. The glorious faculties of the soul, its high aspirations, its sensibility to the great and good in character, its sympathy with disinterestedness and suffering virtue, its benevolent and religious instincts, its thirst for a happiness not found on earth, these are overlooked or thrown into the shade, that they may not disturb the persuasion of man's natural corruption. Ingenuity is employed to disparage what is interesting in the human character. Whilst the bursts of passion in the new-born child are gravely urged as indications of a nature rooted in corruption, its bursts of affection, its sweet smile, its innocent and irrepressible joy, its loveliness and beauty are not listened to, though they plead more eloquently its alliance with higher natures. . . . Even the higher efforts of disinterested benevolence, and the most unaffected expressions of piety, if not connected with what is called the ' true faith,' are, by the most rigid disciples of this doctrine which I oppose, resolved into passion for distinction, or some other working of unsanctified nature." *

Calvin by no means softens this picture of

* Dr. Channing, vol. iil. p. 186.

man. He passes the same judgment in his Institutes on the virtues of the ancient pagans, * and one of its chapters has for its title the following proposition : "From corrupt Human Nature proceeds nothing that is not damnable." † One citation will suffice to show the opinions of Calvin :

"There remains," he says, "this indubitable truth which no artifice can shake, that the mind of man is so far alienated from God's justice, that he violently conceives, desires, and strives after nothing that is not impious, fallacious, filthy, impure ; his heart is so filled with poison, that it breathes forth nothing but stench." ‡

If our nature be wholly bad, desires nothing, and can do nothing, but sin, of course we cannot be expected to desire the truth, to love the good, to crave religion, to reverence God, or to wish for any virtue or goodness whatever. Human Nature and Religion are once and for all eternally separated and divorced. How they ever can be united again is beyond comprehension. This point, however, will afford material for another chapter of absurdities. Let us not anticipate.

The Presbyterian Confession of Faith of 1827, Art. xi., speaking of the effects of the fall, holds the following language :

* Lib. iii. 614, § 1-7.

† Lib. ii. c. 3, p. 93.

‡ Inst. xl. c. v.

“From the original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, or made opposite to all good, wholly inclined to all evil.” Again, c. xvi. § viii. “Of good works.—Works done by unregenerate men,” so runs the article, “although for the matter of them, they may be things which God commands, and of good use both to themselves and others ; yet because they proceed not from a heart purified by faith ; nor are done in a right manner, according to the word ; nor to a right end, the glory of God ; they are therefore sinful and cannot please God, or make a man meet to receive grace from God. And yet, the neglect of them is more sinful and displeasing to God.”

The eighth article of the Anglican religion is conceived in the same spirit. “Of works before justification, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin.”

“Works done by unregenerate men are sinful.” “Yet the neglect of them is displeasing to God.” It follows, then, that we displease God by not doing “sinful works.” Such is the manifest absurdity, impiety, and blasphemy of the purified Christianity taught by the great “Gospel Doctors.” The best compendium of these wretched tenets is the following :

“You shall and you shan’t,
You can and you can’t,
You will and you won’t,
You’ll be damned if you do,
You’ll be damned if you don’t.”

But we have not yet fully sounded the depths of man’s depravity according to the glorious light of the Reformation. Not content with making all our acts sinful, they attack our very nature, substance, and essence, and deprave that also. Luther teaches that :

“It is in the nature of man to sin ; sin constitutes the essence of man ; man, as he is born of his father and mother, together with his whole nature and essence, is not only a sinner, but sin itself.” *

Melancthon,† and also Matthias Flacius followed their master, Luther, in this matter. And Mr. Charles Wesley, in his sermon, “The way to the Kingdom,” says :

“Know that thou art corrupted in every power, in every faculty of thy soul, that thou art totally corrupted in every one of these, all the foundations of being are out of course. The eyes of the understanding are darkened, so that they cannot discern God or the things of God.”

* Quenstedt. Theo. part ii. p. 134.

† Loc. theol., p. 19.

Thus Wesley was true to the genuine spirit of Protestantism ; believing with its founder, Luther, that “ the person, the nature, our whole being is corrupted by the fall of Adam.” *

In remarking on this wretched theology, a modern author says : “ What is most desolating in this psychological system, is, that this monarch of creation is not permitted to raise himself from the abyss into which the fall of the first man has plunged him ; to efface from his brow the mark which the avenging hand of the Creator has stamped on it, to recover the titles of his heavenly origin. More unhappy than the violet of which Luther not long since spoke, man knows himself ; he knows all the happiness which he has lost, all the misery and ignorance which he retains, and the inheritance of glory which has escaped him. A few drops of water will renew a flower that droops on its stem ; but man is doomed to debasement ; nothing henceforth can vivify or restore him,—neither will, nor thought, nor deed ; for these mental operations are corrupted like their source, and man sins even in doing good. Such was Luther’s doctrine, a doctrine of despair, which might be understood in hell, where the soul, surprised in sin, cannot merit ; but which, upon

* Aug. Aug. xl. p. 375.

earth, cleansed by the blood of the Lamb, is only an outrage on the Deity." *

As one abyss calls unto a deeper, so does one error lead to a more serious one. According to the Protestant religion, all of man's thoughts, feelings, actions, are depraved ; more, his very nature, being, essence, is totally corrupt. But not content with this, the Reformers go still further, and endeavor to despoil man of even the faculties of his soul, and those too the noblest given to him by his Creator—Reason and Free-Will.

The Lutheran confession describes the image of God in man as the natural capacity in man to know God, to fear Him, and to confide in Him. †

"Man," so Luther affirms, "lost by sin these natural faculties ; he did not remain in his natural integrity as the scholastics dream." ‡

Thus does this false religion mutilate our nature, and despoil man of his noble and most excellent powers, and reduce him to the level of the creatures which perish.

"I say," repeats the German Reformer, "that the spiritual powers are not only corrupted, but also, by sin, wholly and altogether effaced, both in men and the devils." §

* Audin's Life of Luther, v. 2, p. 71.

† In Gen. c. iii.

‡ Apol. peccat. orig. § 7. 56.

§ Werke, 1539, i. p. 19.

“The Formulary of Concord” expresses the same ; it says : “that man no longer possesses even the least spark of spiritual powers.” *

Victorinus Stringel, a Protestant, asserted “that fallen man possesses at least the faculty, the capacity, the aptitude to know God, and to will what is holy ; although this faculty is completely paralyzed, as it were benumbed, and is not susceptible of any spontaneous exertion.” †

But the orthodox party of Protestants condemned him, and affirmed that even the bare faculty of knowledge and will,—that mere empty form in the soul of man had been destroyed.

“They are to be repudiated,” so runs “the Solid Declaration,” “who teach that man has yet left remaining from his original state any thing good, whatever it may be, or however paltry or trifling it may be, as for instance : the capacity or aptitude, or any powers in spiritual things.” ‡ Again : “The divine image has been utterly effaced by original sin, and thereby plucked from the posterity of Adam.” §

Plank, a Protestant, in his History of Protestantism, puts all doubts aside, and admits that “Luther gave to the assertion that man no longer possesses any will for good, so extensive a sense,

* p. 629.

† Lib. arb. § 44, p. 644.

‡ Plank. v. iv. p. 584.

§ § 9, p. 614.

that it would thence follow, that man, corrupted by original sin, no longer possesses the power of will, that is, the faculty of will." *

"Had Plank," says Moehler, "only added, 'and no longer possesses the faculty of knowledge for the superabundance (for both are included in *Liberum arbitrium*)', he would then have stated with perfect accuracy the Lutheran doctrine. Thus," continues Moehler, "according to the Lutheran orthodoxy, did man lose, through Adam's fall, the most exalted and most subtle portion of his spiritual essence,—the part of his substance kindred to divinity,—the implanted organ for God, and for divine things inherent in his nature ; so that after its loss, he sank down into a mere earthly power, having henceforth organs only for the finite world, its laws, its ordinances, its relations. †

* Vol. vi. p. 715.

† Symbolism, p. 147.

XX.

Justification.

"The soul once saved shall never cease from bliss,
Nor God lose that He buyeth with his blood.
She doth not sin. The deeds which look like sin,
The flesh and the false world, are all to her
Hallowed and glorified."

FESTUS.

OUR intention was not to touch on this point, but its close connection with, or rather its logical sequence from, what has preceded, and its being considered as the central doctrine of Protestantism, has determined us to devote a few pages to its consideration.

"Without this doctrine of justification by faith alone," says Luther, "the Holy Ghost will not abide with us." * "All knowledge of the truth will fall to the ground." † "If this doctrine falls, all is over with us." ‡

* Jen. Aug. v. 22S.

† Walch, Aug. viii.

‡ Table Talk.

We must not forget what we have already learned ;—that according to the Religion of Protestants, “man is wholly depraved,” “corrupted even to the very essence and core of his being,” “and has lost every spark of his spiritual faculties.”

It is a subject worthy of serious consideration to every reflecting mind, how such a being can become good again, reconciled to God, and inherit eternal glory. How this can be brought about, consistently with Reason, every body must be curious to know. The doctrine concerning the nature and operation of this change is the one on which the whole Protestant religion is reared.

We must ascend to the fountain source on a point of such importance, and once more employ “The key of the Reformation.”

“The Justification of a Christian,” says Dr. Luther, “is not an essential justification, but a reputed one.” *

This has at least in its favor logical consistency. For it is inconceivable how a being who is essentially corrupt can be essentially justified. The work of justification must necessarily be not essential, for there is no solid foundation, nothing good for it to be based upon. It must be a foreign, extraneous justification, reputed to man,

* 1 c. 6423. a.

not his, but as though it were his own,—a sham justification. Luther explains :—

“Christ has fulfilled the law for us, and we have only to appropriate this to ourselves by faith.” *

We are again puzzled how one who has not left a spark of spiritual powers, can have faith ? This too, of course, must be something wholly extrinsic. But let this appropriation be made, it does not change the nature of the one who makes it. Luther says so :—

“The faithful, on account of the obedience of Christ, are looked upon as just, although, by virtue of corrupt nature, they are truly sinners, and remain such even unto death.” †

Man, therefore, according to the religious principles of Protestantism, is not justified from his sins, but in them ; for “the faithful are truly sinners even unto death.” But we are curious to know what happens beyond death.

For the difficulty is not less great in the next than in this world, how a being corrupted in its very essence can ever be made good, perfect, holy. Will Protestants send a depraved, corrupted, altogether sinful being to heaven to enjoy the presence of God ? Yet how can they escape doing this if true to their principles ? We see not. Rather

* Walch, *Ausg.* x. 1461.

† Solid. declar. de fide 815. p. 657.

than give up this essential doctrine of their religion, they will send a man "as black and ugly as the devil himself almost, to heaven!" Listen to Martin the Reformer.

"It is because of Christ that Christians are called snow-white, even much purer than the sun, the moon, and the stars. But herein we must pay great attention, that this purity is not ours, but extraneous purity. For the Lord Christ adorns and clothes us with his purity and justice. However, if you regarded a Christian aside from the purity and justice of Christ, as he is in himself, you would simply see, however holy he might be, no purity at all in him; you would see him as black and ugly as the devil himself almost." *

If ever there was a religion whose fundamental principle was an unreality, it is the religion founded by "Luther, this bringer back of men to reality," † as he is called. If ever there was a paradise of shams, it is the paradise of Christians who follow "this true spiritual Hero." ‡ The paradise of Mahomet is vastly more attractive than a heaven composed of so-called "Christians as black and ugly as the devil himself almost." We have not, however, reached the end of the absurdities of the glorious Reformation—absurdities sufficient

* Augs. Augs. viii. p. 548.

† Carlyle.

‡ Ibid.

to deprive any man who would believe them of common sense.

Having put out the light of Reason in man, and concealed his corruption by a cloak, Luther endeavors now to blind the Almighty, whose eyes are brighter than the sun, and who sees the inmost recesses of our hearts.

“God can see no sins in us,” such is his language, “though we were filled with sins, even though we were nothing but sin, within and without, body and soul, from the top of the head to the soles of our feet. He sees only the dear, costly blood of his beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, with which we are sprinkled. For this same blood is the golden mantle of grace, with which we are clothed, and in which we appear before God. Wherefore he cannot, and will not, see us other than were we his beloved Son himself, full of justice, holiness, and innocence.” *

Those who can believe in such a God, who can accept such a redemption, and adopt such a religion, the powers above help them ! As for ourselves, it is too enormous a tax on credulity.

The sinner is not only uncleansed from his sins, he is even exhorted by this restorer of Christianity to continue in them.

* Augs. Augs. viii. p. 878. -

“Sin lustily, but be more lusty in faith, and rejoice in Christ, who is the conqueror of sin, of death, and of the world. Sin we must, so long as we remain here. It suffices, that, through the riches of the glory of God, we know the Lamb which taketh away the sins of the world ! from Him no sin will sever us, though a million times a day we should fornicate, or commit murder.” *

What must not be the stupidity of those who can be made to believe that the promulgation of doctrines such as these, was the “re-appearance of Christianity !” that “Protestantism was the emancipation of Reason !” Reappearance rather of barbarism, and heathendom ! Emancipation of “the flesh !” The Protestant Reformation was nothing else than the rebellion of the unregulated passions of man under the guise of the emancipation of the human mind. That this is no unfair statement of the views of Luther, we have his own words for it. Read his definition of Christianity.

“Christianity,” he says, “is nothing else than a constant practice of this article that you are not sensible of sin, however you may have sinned, since your sins adhere to Christ, who is for all eternity a Saviour from sin, death, hell.” †

* Epist. to Io. Aurifabio, tom. 1 ; Jena. 1856, p. 545.

† Op. Lat. 1 c.

Thus under the garb of Christianity license is given to every excess of passion, and the commission of the worst of crimes. Turks would reject with abhorrence such a religion, and the Thugs of India, though practising on its principles, would blush to avow them in broad daylight. How can we account for such doctrines unless we admit, with Dr. Johnson, that “to find a substitution for violated morality, was the leading feature in all perversions of religion.” *

Melancthon and Calvin held like opinions. The latter says :—

“The word ‘justification’ signifies the declaring one just, the acquitting him of sins, the eternal justice of Christ, which is by God imputed to faith.” † Again : “We are accounted just in Christ, which in ourselves we are not.” ‡

“This is the same,” says Moehler, “as if any one were to purchase a very learned book, and, instead of stamping its contents deeply on his mind, and in this way appropriating it, so that he might become a living book, should hold himself very learned, because the learned book was his outward property.” §

The Protestant Episcopal Church of England looks with the same jealous eye on this doctrine as

* Boswell's Life. † Inst. lib. iii. c 11, § 2, fol. 260. ‡ Ibid. § 3. § 212.

“the strong Rock and foundation of the Christian religion.” In Art. XI. “Of the Justification of man,” it says :—

“Wherefore, that we are justified by Faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort.”

That the founder of Methodism held this same most pernicious doctrine, and that it was practised on by the early Methodists to an alarming and horrid extent, we have seen in the preceding pages. And when he was charged with not preaching this doctrine, he refutes it by saying : “Now, do I preach that we are justified by faith and works ? I did for 10 years : I was fundamentally a papist and knew it not. But I do testify to all, that no good works can be done before justification, none which have not in them the nature of sin.” *

“How few,” exclaims Fletcher, another pillar of Methodism, “how few of our celebrated pulpits are there, where more has not been said for sin than against it !” †

Sir Rowland Hill, another pillar of Methodism, maintained that

“Even adultery and murder do not hurt the pleasant children, but rather work for their good.” ‡

* Southey's Life. v. i. p. 141.

† Check to Antinom. p. 215.

‡ Fletcher's works, vol. iii. p. 50.

“God sees no sin in believers,” says the same, “whatever sin they may commit. My sins might displease God ; my person is always acceptable to him. Though I should out-sin Manasses, I should not be less a pleasant child, because God always views me in Christ. Hence in the midst of adulteries, murders, and incests, he can address me with ‘Thou art all fair, my dove, my undefiled ; there is no spot in thee.’ Though I believe not those who say, ‘let us sin that grace may abound ;’ adultery, incest, and murder, shall, upon the whole, make me holier on earth, and merrier in heaven.” *

This may seem revolting to our moral sentiments, and no one can deny that it is. And yet there is no escape from it on Protestant principles. For once admit the doctrine of “total depravity,” and the doctrine of “justification by faith alone,” the “imputation of righteousness,” and the “impossibility of good works,” follow necessarily.

If the modern professors of Protestant Christianity pretend to escape these shocking doctrines, and their dreadfully immoral issues, they may ; but they can only do it by rejecting the fundamental doctrine of the great Reformation ; or, by “stifling their Reason,” as the great lights of the

* Check to Antinom. vol. iv. p. 97.

Reformation did, and sagaciously recommended their followers to do.

For Reason and Protestantism cannot stand together. No one was more convinced of this fact than the author of the Reformation ; and it was this conviction that led him to send Reason to the wall. Modern Protestants, lacking the courage of their fearless leader, escape taking this bold position, only by adopting a depraved logic.

XXI.

Sectarianism.

"To hear
Such wranglings is joy for vulgar minds."—DANTE.

STRANGE as it may seem, yet it is none the less true, that not a few regard one of the most evident marks of error, and the most destructive feature of the religious revolution of the sixteenth century, as a sign of truth, as a proof of progress, and a title to their gratitude. Were this confined to a few or to vulgar minds, it might be passed over in silence ; but such is not the case. There are poets, historians, philosophers, literary men, who would have us believe that the endless discussions and subdivisions into which Protestantism has divided the religious world is a cheering sign of life and a benefit to humanity.

The poet, out of respect to his rank, shall first give in his evidence of this popular hallucination :

“ God sends his teachers unto every age,
To every clime, and every race of men ;
With revelations fitted to their growth
And shape of mind, nor gives the realms of Truth
Into the selfish rule of one sole race :
Therefore each form of worship that hath swayed
The life of man, and given it to grasp
The master-key of knowledge, reverence,
Enfolds some germs of goodness and of right.” *

The idea conveyed in these lines is that God parcels out the truth to men as though they had not the capacity to receive it in its integrity. All men are integrally, constitutionally, the same ; each possessing all the capacities and powers of another. What one race knows all races may substantially know, and equally so every man of the race. Instead of making God the author of wrangling creeds, it would be more in accordance with right and honorable views of God, to look for their causes elsewhere.

Truth leads the mind to take broader views of things, and gives to men common sympathies ; it is therefore precisely the realm of truth which men have need of to free them from the selfish rule of

* Lowell.

one sole race. The idea that man is not endowed with the capacity to receive the whole truth, or that God has not given it to him, is as unsound in philosophy as it is false to history.

The historian shall now give his lesson on this subject :

“ Wherever you see men clustering together to form a party, you may,” he says, “ be sure that however much error may be there, truth is there also.”

Had the writer of the above stopped his pen at this point, he would have remained inside the boundaries of sound philosophy. Indeed he has enunciated a great truth, and one which, rightly understood, overthrows completely the fundamental errors of Protestantism.

For his statement implies that the intellect of man cannot operate without the truth. It follows that we must either deny to man all rational, intellectual life, which is abominable ; or we must repudiate the hateful doctrine of total depravity, which implies that man has lost all hold on the true.

But the historian did not stop here ; he continues, and says :

“ Apply this principle boldly ; for it contains a lesson of candor and a voice of encouragement. There never was a school of philosophy, nor a clan

in the realm of opinion, but carried along with it some important truth." Mark now, ingenuous reader, what follows : " And therefore every sect that has ever flourished has benefited Humanity ; for the errors of that sect pass away and are forgotten ; its truths are received into the common inheritance." *

The candor of this lesson we accept most cordially ; but its voice sounds to our ears, not as one of encouragement, but as the saddest kind of discouragement. It were indeed a sad and gloomy prospect for Humanity, if we had to grope about in darkness for the truth, and be doomed to pick up her scattered limbs, and find of these but fragments. It is greatly to be feared that the discovery of the fair form of truth would eventuate as disastrously as the fabled search which Isis made for the mangled body of Osiris. For truth is one, and has its source in an eminent unity, and the attempt to form the whole body of Truth from its scattered limbs, would end in producing a mass of fragments, without unity, symmetry, or a life-giving principle. The failure would be as certain as the effort to form the sun by gathering together its scattered beams.

On the supposition that God has brought men

* Bancroft's Miscel. p. 416.

into darkness, or that man is incapable of grasping the whole truth at once, the smallest fraction of truth discovered is a benefit to Humanity. This is not the lot of man, and the multiplication of sects must be regarded, not as a means of increasing the common inheritance of truth, but rather as the decay and destruction of its fair proportions.

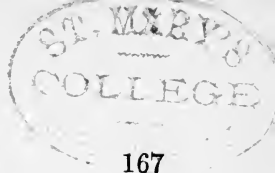
Thomas Carlyle tells us in his usual odd way, the same thing. "All isms," he says, "have a truth in them, or men would not take them up." *

Unmixed error does not exist, and if it did, the mind of man could not take it up. His statement would be more in accordance with truth had he said that all isms have a most pernicious lie in them, and no man whose mind is not partially blinded or asleep, would take up with any of them, or all put together. Man has divine instincts which seek to know the universal truth, and crave for the illimitable good, and this is the reason why sects are so unsatisfactory, and so soon outlived.

Some of these advocates of sects go so far as to look upon the divisions of Protestantism as the source of its strength.

"The truth is," says the celebrated Dr. Channing, "that the divisions of Protestantism go far

* Heroes.



to constitute its strength. . . . Protestantism, by being broken into a great variety of sects, has adapted itself to the various modifications of Human Nature. Every sect has embodied religion in a form suited to a large class of minds. It has met some want, answered to some great principle of the soul." *

The unperturbed religious sentiment naturally and powerfully yearns after unity. He, therefore, who looks upon the isolation of men in their religious sympathies as an evidence of strength, is like a man who should detect in the process of decay of bodies, signs of vigorous life. There is life there, but it is that of desolation, destruction and death.

Consistent with right views of Truth and of Human Nature, variety of sects should be looked upon not as adaptations to its wants, but as the marks of a deep-seated uneasiness ;

"Like a sick wretch
Who finds no rest upon her down, but oft
Shifting her side, short respite seeks from pain." †

"Sects are essential to freedom and progress," says Dr. Channing. Yes ; where error and not truth lies at the foundation. Error disunites,

* Works, v. iii., p. 273.

† Dante.

isolates, and produces harsh discord ; while truth brings men together in bonds of common brotherhood, producing love and perfect unity. It is a proof of a secret and painful tyranny exercised over the mind, and a mark of a radically false religion, where freedom and progress can only be preserved by hostile sects, and by causing violent divisions among men. This thralldom accounts in a great measure for the constantly increasing sects in Protestant communities ; and explains why the great body of intelligent men stand aloof, and look with indifference, if not contempt, at the countless sects of the Protestant Religion.

Is not the idea that regards the multiplication of contradictions concerning man's most sacred relations and solemn obligations to God himself, and his fellow-man, as "beneficial to Humanity," or "essential to freedom and progress," the complete abandonment of the belief in Christianity as a Divine Religion ? Is it not to insult our common sense, outrage our moral feelings, or to suppose we have none ?

How is it that men, otherwise intelligent, venture to put forth such glaringly false theories ? They must be in a most unnatural relation with things, to have recourse to such pitiful and contracted views to sustain their position. A mode-

rately sound intellect, with the common instincts of Humanity, in its better moments would have, even in spite of itself, opened its eyes to see the absurdity of these views, and made it feel how unworthy they were of God and of Human Nature. In some such moment, Channing must have penned the following most energetic passage :—

“I am lost in amazement,” he exclaims, “at the amount of arrogant folly, of self-complacent intolerance, of almost incredible blindness, to the end and essence of Christianity, which the history of sects reveals . . . On sects, and on the spirit of sects, I *must* be allowed to look with grief, shame, pity,—I had almost said, with contempt.” *

When Religion fails to teach men their true relations with God, either because it has no fixed doctrines, or does not teach them in such a way as to produce conviction, the intellect becomes the prey of doubt and despair, and men, instead of uniting their activities in one common aim, separate, turn selfish, and are indifferent to their future. Art degenerates and becomes fragmentary, science lends itself to skepticism, and political institutions are made the sport of revolutions.

This point demands development, but we have neither the space, nor leisure, to treat it as its

* Works, p. 284.

importance requires , the Reader must be satisfied with an individual example of its truth, and that in the order of art.

It would be a difficult task to find one whose natural gifts of genius were superior to those of Goethe. He was born and bred a Protestant, and is held up to the world by a class of men as one who completed his nature by a beautiful and harmonious development of all his faculties.

With his surprising gifts he seemed to understand, if he did not always appreciate, the separate and isolated views of almost every sect and party. But these he never saw in their kindred relations with the whole body of truth. He saw with a wonderful clearness the scattered rays of truth, and is well called, the many-sided Goethe ; but he failed to discover the splendid orb from whose centre they come forth and depend. He possessed in an extraordinary degree the gift of throwing himself into the state and feelings of others, and expressing those with fidelity ; yet he never succeeded in giving to them unity, symmetry, and completeness, in forming them into a perfect work of art. The most artistically finished productions of Goethe are imitations of the classics ; his original ones are fragmentary, disconnected,

incomplete ; for instance, Wilhelm Meister, and Faust.

Goethe's abilities, breadth of mind and culture, have led his admirers to suppose that the creations of his own genius were also pure works of art, and his critics, not finding them such, fail to satisfy these cherished opinions. The admirers of Goethe condemn his critics for his deficiencies.

These deficiencies are not, however, to be attributed to his genius, but to the discordant and irreconcilable elements of his religion. It is Religion that reveals to man his inmost being and its adequate expression. The image must be placed face to face with the original to bring out its full meaning, value, and beauty. Man is God's image, and it is the office of Religion to teach him his true relations to God. But this task Protestantism was unable to accomplish, hence its inadequacy to give unity and peace to the mind, and elevate the soul to a steady union with the first true, good, and fair, its Original.

How sensible Goethe himself was of this, runs all through the tragedy of Faust, and we select the following passage as but one of its many expressions :—

“Two souls, alas! are lodged in my wild breast,
Which evermore opposing ways endeavor,
The one lives only on the joys of time,
Still to the world with clamp-like organs clinging;
The other leaves this earthy dust and slime,
To fields of sainted sires up-springing.”

Deprived of the answers and help of the true Religion, he was compelled to make one of his own. Following one-sidedly the intellect, he excluded the sensitive part of man's nature, by adopting the false maxim of Spinoza, that virtue was to be practised without any idea of reward or merit. Now the appetite for the good is no less an essential part of our common nature than the desire for the true, or the admiration of the beautiful. To attempt to exclude it from its legitimate action in Religion, or any other sphere of life, must needs end in failure. As one extreme produces its opposite, so here, in his practical life, Goethe sacrificed his rational nature by following one-sidedly the sensitive. Thus, in his theory of Religion, he was a purist; in his practice, an epicurean.

“Many-sided” Goethe! We accept this word applied to him by his admirers, and regard it as the severest criticism that could be made on one so highly gifted as he was, as a thinker, poet,

and religious man. It was only by virtue of his various and richly-gifted genius that he escaped the common fate of Protestants of becoming one-sided. Had he discovered that Religion which, in its transcendent and majestic unity, embraces all truth, he would have been all-sided.

What we hold to be the truth in this matter is very simple and easily understood. Briefly it is as follows :—

God has endowed all men with the faculties to know all truth necessary for their happiness here and eternal happiness hereafter. All these necessary truths God has not failed to make known to men, and in such a way that the knowledge of them may be easily gained by men of the simplest capacity. Consequently, if men differ in regard to these truths, it is either because they have neglected to employ their faculties, or have not employed them rightly.

These principles commend themselves to all men who think justly, and are agreeable to all true and honorable ideas of God. At the same time they demolish altogether and conclusively the arguments of the advocates of sectarianism, and refute the speculations of the philosophers of narrow-mindedness.

XXII.

The Results.

“So after many years in seeming free,
More closely fettered than at first are we.”

GOETHE.

SUCH being the fundamental principles of Protestant Christianity, it is not to be wondered at that a large class of intelligent minds have found it an unsatisfactory Religion. Some of this class keep up an outward connection with one or the other of its more distinguished sects for the sake of the younger members of their families, and because it is a part of respectability ; others profess a general belief in Christianity, but regard all its distinctive doctrines as mere matters of opinion. A still larger share stand aloof from all forms and sects of Protestantism, adopt in the mean time such religious views as accord with the

truths of Reason, and look forward in hope for a Religion which shall welcome the highest aspirations and be commensurate with the deepest wants of their nature.

What does excite our wonder is not that intelligent men should detect and repudiate this anti-natural religion and spurious Christianity, but that they should have suffered this degrading imposition so long in silence. For he who would receive genuine orthodox Protestantism, must begin by stifling in his breast the convictions of conscience, trample under foot his heaven-born freedom, and put out with his own hands the light of his Reason. A genuine Protestant is one who has effaced from his soul all vestiges of the Divine image of his Maker, and that in the name of Religion !

This is no exaggeration, but sacred truth, and truth acknowledged and felt to be so by themselves.

“ The natural movements of the soul are repressed,” says one who knew from experience the effects of orthodox Protestant preaching ; “ the grace, and ornament, and innocent exhilarations of life frowned upon ; and a gloomy, repulsive religion is cultivated, which, by way of compensation for its privations, claims a monopoly of God’s

favor, abandoning all to his wrath who will not assume its own sad livery and echo its own sepulchral tones. Through such exhibitions Religion has lost its honor ; and though the most ennobling of all sentiments, dilating the soul with vast thoughts and unbounded hope, has been thought to contract and degrade it.” *

Speaking of the prevailing theology of his time, and its mournful effects, he says : “ I know that it spreads over minds an unsupportable gloom, that it generates a spirit of bondage and fear, that it chills the best affections, that it represses virtuous efforts, that it sometimes shakes the throne of reason. On susceptible minds the influence of this system is always to be dreaded. If it be believed, I think there is ground for despondency bordering on insanity. If I, and my beloved friends, and my whole race, have come from the hand of our Creator wholly depraved, irresistibly propense to all evil and averse to all good—if only a portion are chosen to escape from this miserable state, and if the rest are to be consigned by the Being who gave us our depraved and wretched nature, to endless torments in unextinguishable flames,—then, too, I think that nothing remains

* Dr. Channing's Works, viii. p. 267.

but to mourn in anguish of heart ; then existence is a curse,—the Creator is ——

“ O my merciful Father ! I cannot speak of Thee in the language which this system would suggest. No ! Thou hast been too kind to me to deserve this reproach from my lips. Thou hast created me to be happy ; Thou callest me to virtue and piety, because in these consists my felicity ; and Thou wilt demand nothing from me but what Thou givest me ability to perform.” *

To expose the character of this Religion, hostile to man's nature, and which cloaked itself with the garb of Evangelical Christianity ; and to induce men to throw off its awfully oppressive and degrading servitude, by exciting in them the moral sense, by stimulating the consciousness of their manhood, and by exalting the dignity of man, this was the task of Dr. Channing. His mission, therefore, was a great, good, and noble one ; and nobly he performed it.

Another distinguished writer, speaking from the effects of this cruel and most unnatural Religion on childhood, says :

“ Accept the injurious propositions of our early catechetical instructions, and even honesty and self-denial were but splendid sins, if they did not

* Dr. Channing's Works, p. 356.

wear the Christian name. One would rather be a Pagan, suckled in a creed outworn, than to be defrauded of his manly right in coming into nature, and finding not names and places, not land and professions, but even virtue and truth, foreclosed and monopolized. You shall not be a man even. You shall not own the world. You shall not dare to live after the Infinite Law that is in you, and in company with the Infinite Beauty which heaven and the earth reflects to you in all lovely forms ; but you must subordinate your nature to Christ's nature ; you must accept our interpretation, and take his portrait as the vulgar draw it." *

Such being the influence of the prevailing forms of Protestantism, we are not surprised that Mr. Emerson, in his earlier writings, is not weary in insisting upon "Self-reliance," "Be true to thyself," "Act out thyself," and maxims of like import ; for by following these, men would escape the "injurious impositions of their early catechetical instructions." This is no small gain and relief.

Mr. Emerson's appeals are the voice of an outraged conscience and an oppressed Reason, claiming their rights and freedom in tones of manly sincerity and courage. This attitude excites admira-

* Emerson.

tion, and in view of the wretched tenets he was taught to believe in his early childhood, one may easily overlook the one-sided views, and the exaggerations uttered in protest against them. Certain passages in his writings shock all well-regulated and genuine religious feeling ; but indulgence may even be extended here, for these are only counter-statements of greater indignities offered to God by a false Christianity. Honor is due to his boldly upholding the worth and dignity of man ; yet it is equally a subject of deep regret, that perversion of his splendid abilities to the circulation of the abominable theories of the German Pantheistical atheists. "Our theism," he says, "is the purification of the human mind." "Religion is nothing else than the pious ejaculation of a few imaginative men ;" these, and numerous other instances, both of poetry and prose, are nothing else than a vain repetition of the malignant doctrines of Fichte, Hegel, Feuerbach, Proudhon, and men of this stamp. Doctrines, too, thank Heaven, which will never take root on the virgin soil of America. That voice of nature to which he so often appeals, would, if listened to, shudder at even their suggestion. Justly, then, in this regard, we may retort on Ralph Waldo Emerson his own appeal : "Be true to thyself," and Reason will teach thee that

it is unworthy as well as undignified to insult the common belief of ages, and shock man's holiest affections. How systematically and sadly must that man's intellectual and moral faculties be perverted, who can look upon the Great Omniscient God as only the intuition of himself, and the Holy and Eternal Truths of Religion as the simple unfolding of human nature ! What a twist in the faculties, what a distortion of the natural channels of thought, for one to take the shadow for the substance ! the picture for the original !

These extravagant efforts to magnify man, are only the natural rebound from the opposite extreme of his excessive debasement. The genuine and more truthful efforts of Mr. Emerson, them true Religion must look upon with a friendly eye, for they go to create a basis for a future belief.

Yes ! the basis of a future belief ; for after you have gained self-reliance, and trust in the dictates of Reason, what have you then ? Religion ? By no means. You have the foundation for Religion to work upon, the instruments needed for its discovery, but you have not yet Religion. You are in possession of those elements without which all genuine Religion is impossible ; but it remains yet for you to find that Religion which is in harmony with these, which accords with your mental and

moral constitution. For, that nature does not suffice nature, itself testifies, as we learned in the foregoing chapters.

True Religion, then, sympathizes, and cannot but sympathize, with all those who indignantly reject as false a Religion which, while it with one breath proclaims the right of private judgment, denies to man, with the next, the faculty of Reason ; while it cries out liberty, refuses to man Free-will ; while it professes to have been the friend of progress, the means of elevating mankind, declares him essentially and wholly depraved ; while it plumes itself as being a purified Gospel, publicly proclaims that man is not called upon to keep God's holy law ! The rejection of such a Religion is the assertion of Reason, Free-will, the worth of Human Nature, the supremacy of Virtue ; and is not this a preparation for genuine Religion, true Christianity ? Not to repudiate such a creed, is an evidence of the truth of its debasing tenets, an evidence of the want of Reason, Freedom, Virtue, and every quality that helps to make a man.

Men are throwing off the fetters with which this spurious Religion has bound them.

"The creed of the Puritans," says the same author, "is passing away, and worse arise in its

room. I think no man can go with his thoughts about him, into one of our churches, without feeling, that what hold the public worship had on men is gone, or going. It has lost its grasp on the affections of the good and the fear of the bad. In the country neighborhoods, half parishes are signing off,—to use the local term ; for the motive that holds the last there, is now only a hope and a waiting.”

The only way that Protestantism can hold any ground, is by overpowering the mind in early childhood by its gloomy fears and merciless threats. No man of mature intelligence embraces it, for there is no point of agreement between them. Protestantism lives in discord, and can progress only at the sacrifice of intelligence, manly virtue, and true freedom. Hence the youth who have escaped from its restraints have no affection for it, and the older folks have lost all interest in its success.

“The Church,” continues the same author, “or the religious party, is falling from the Church nominal, and is appearing in temperance and non-resistance societies, in movements of abolitionists and socialists, and in very significant assemblies, called Sabbath and Bible conventions.”* To complete his picture up to the present, he would

* Lecture p. 14.

have added, and in circles of table-tippings, rapping mediums, and free-lovers.

If more evidence were needed of the wretched failure of Protestant Christianity in this country, we would refer the reader to a remarkable report of five Protestant Episcopal Bishops on a memorial addressed to their body by some of its most distinguished ministers and laymen, which “proceeds on the assumption that the Episcopal Church confined to the exercise of her present system, is not adequate to do the work of the Lord in this land and in this age.” * Among communications from their own members there are a few from “eminent clergymen of different names.” We give a specimen from one entitled, “From a Baptist divine :”

“The present state of the Christian Church, and its relation to the world, is anomalous and almost shocking to a Christian. Especially is this the case in this country. Here is no persecution ; the Word of God is open ; ministers more numerous than in any Protestant country, and working ministers than in any papal country, I presume. There is nothing visible to prevent the universal dominion of Christianity, and what is the result ? The number of professors of religion is diminishing in all our sects. The churches are coming to a

stand for want of ministers. There is hardly a distinction observable between Christians and other men in practice, so far as all the forms of worldliness are concerned. The conscience of Christians, in too large a proportion of cases, is below the average of men who have no guide but natural conscience. Let a case arise in which Christians and other men come into contact, and the Christian will do things which an honorable man would despise. To ask an honorable man of no profession to be converted, meaning that he should be such a man as many whom he sees professing Christianity, would be, frequently, hardly less than insulting. Hence infidelity abounds and waxes strong. Humanity is rather showing itself out of the Church than in it. Men care more for their political parties than for the precepts of Christ, and on every political question, in Congress and out of it, sacrifice one to the other.

“This is abnormal. Christ and his apostles never contemplated it. In twenty or thirty years, at the present rate of diminution, the candlestick will be removed out of its place. . . . The Church has no conversions, and no hold on the masses. The most successful church building is that which includes the poor by necessity.” . . . His communication ends with the frank acknow-

ledgment of the fact that, "If what we see is all Christianity can do, it is a failure." *

What has powerfully accelerated the downfall of Protestantism in this country, is the antagonism which exists between it and the spirit of our institutions. The foundations of our political fabric do not suppose Reason imbecile, nor human will enslaved ; they rest on the maxim of man's capability of self-government, and this presupposes the possession and exercise of Reason and Free Will. The free institutions of the United States are not based on man's essential depravity, but on his essential goodness ; not on the mistrust of Human Nature, but on confidence in its inborn faculties and natural instincts ;—so far is that from truth which some Protestant divines would have us believe, that "our political institutions are based on too favorable an opinion of human nature, and therefore, unsustained by Christianity they must fall." † It is precisely the opposite that is true. It is their wretched views of Christianity and Human Nature that are going, and in a great measure already have gone, by the board. For the natural operation of free American institutions is to cast off a religion which takes Protestant views of Human Nature, as hostile to the principles and genius of its civilization.

* Memorial Papers, p. 427-8-9.

† Dr. Hawkes.

Leaving now our own shores for awhile, let us look abroad where Protestantism is of an older growth, that we may become better acquainted with its ultimate results.

“Will it never be understood,” asks a modern French writer, “since the day of Luther there is no more confession of faith, no more catechism possible? Christianity is nothing more than the vision of humanity, as it has been exposed by each in his turn, from Kant, Schelling, Hegel, Strauss, and in the last place by Feuerbach. This is the glory of the Reformation. It has in this respect merited well of humanity, and is undertaking again the work of Christ, which was already betrayed at the Council of Nice. It surpasses that of its author.

“It was in vain that efforts were made by the most unanimous and most solemn declarations, to give a body to Protestant ideas; it was not possible in the name of the critical faculty to bind the critic; negation was forced to continue infinitely, and all that was done to assert it was condemned beforehand as derogatory to principle, as an usurpation of the rights of posterity, as a retrograde movement.

“So the more years rolled on the more theologians divided among themselves, the more churches were multiplied. And it was precisely

in this that the force and the truth of the Reformation consisted ; in this was its legitimacy, its power of the future. . . . The Reformation was the fermentation of dissolution. . . . After Luther a theology was a contradiction.

“ Without doubt it was repugnant to the religious conscience, moved by the accents of Luther, the most religious man of his age, to acknowledge itself anti-Christian and atheistical, and it is for this reason that after Luther, and even to the present, there is so great a religious effervescence. . . . For humanity does not deduce with great promptitude its ideas, nor make great jumps.

“ But what is certain, is that the philosophical, political, and religious movement of four centuries, in an evident inverse sense, was a symptom, not of creation, but of dissolution.” *

This is not mere theory or speculation. One has only to open his eyes and see what passes around him. The Protestant of London contradicts the Protestant of Berlin ; the Protestant of Berlin contradicts the Protestant of New York ; the Protestant of New York contradicts the Protestant of Charleston ; the Protestant of Charleston contradicts the Protestant of Amsterdam ; the Protestant of Amsterdam contradicts the

* Proudhon sur la Socialisme.

Protestant of Wurtemberg ; the Protestant of Wurtemberg contradicts the Protestant of Geneva, and thus you may proceed from nation to nation, from city to city, from town to town, from village to village, from one individual Protestant to another individual Protestant, and even from the same individual in the morning to the same individual at night, and to sum up all their contradictions, we have remaining as the answer, —nothing. Bayle, long ago, gave a true Protestant answer to Cardinal Polignac, when asked his religion. “I am,” said he, “a Protestant in the full force of the word, for I protest against all truth.”

Let us, before concluding, cast a glance at the fruits of Protestantism on its own native soil, Germany.

“Luther, that powerful sapper, with his formidable hatchet, had to proceed to clear the way for the champions of philosophy—Leibnitz, Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel. The Reformer was the point of departure of German philosophy.” *

We have only to refer the reader to the chapter on “German philosophy” to appreciate the logical consequence of Protestant Germany ; but lest we

* Heyne the poet.

should pass over too slightly a point of such importance we will add a few words here which have a closer bearing on the religious development of that "mighty impulse given to the world three centuries ago."

"It is only the believing unbelief of modern times," says a Protestant German writer, in describing Protestant Germany, "which hides itself behind the Bible, and opposes the Biblical dicta to dogmatic definitions, in order that it may set itself free from the limits of dogma by arbitrary exegesis. But faith has already disappeared, when the determinate tenets of faith are felt as limitations. It is only religious indifference under the appearance of religion, that makes the Bible, which in its nature and origin is indefinite, a standard of faith, and under the pretext of believing only the essential, retains nothing which deserves the name of faith; for example, substituting for the distinctly characterized Son of God, the vague, negative definition of a sinless man, who can claim to be the son of God in a sense applicable to no other being,—in a word, of a man whom one may not trust oneself to call either a man or a God. But that it is merely indifference which makes a hiding place for itself behind the Bible is evident from the fact that even what stands in the

Bible, if it contradicts the standpoint of the present day, is regarded as not obligatory, or is even derided ; nay, actions which are essentially Christian, which are the logical consequences of faith, such as the separation of believers from unbelievers, are now designated as unchristian."

And in speaking in the name of modern Protestantism, he says : " We give a true significance to baptism only by regarding it as a symbol of the value of water itself. Water is the simplest means of grace, or healing for the maladies of the soul as well as the body. But water is effectual only when its use is constant and regular. Baptism, as a single act, is an altogether useless, unmeaning institution, if it is understood to typify and celebrate the moral and physical curative virtues of water. . . I, in fact, put in the place of the barren baptismal water, the beneficent effects of real water."

" But the sacrament of water required," adds this logical offspring of Luther, " a supplement. . . . If in water we declare : man can do nothing without nature ; by bread and wine we declare : nature needs man, as man needs nature. In water, human, mental activity is multiplied ; in bread and wine, it attains self-satisfaction. If in water we adore the pure force of nature, in bread and wine

we adore the supernatural power of mind. Hence this sacrament is only for man matured into consciousness, while baptism is imparted to infants. Bread and wine typify to us the truth that man is the true God and Saviour of men.

“Eating and drinking is the mystery of the Lord’s Supper. Think, therefore, with every morsel of bread which relieves thee from the pain of hunger, with every draught of wine which cheers thy heart, of thy God who confers these beneficent gifts upon thee—think of man ! But in this gratitude towards men, forget not holy nature. Forget not that wine is the blood of plants, and flour the flesh of plants, which are sacrificed for thy well-being. Therefore let bread be sacred for us, let wine be sacred, and let also water be sacred. Amen.” *

Practical Christianity, according to the latest developments of Protestantism, consists in eating and drinking, and bathing. And the best representation of the Protestant Church in the Nineteenth Century which we can imagine, is a cold-water-cure establishment with a tavern attached.

“Protestantism,” so says the same writer, “has thus restored man in life and practice, in morality, to the heathen standpoint, . . . and

* Feuerbach’s *Essence of Christianity*.

not only practically, but theoretically represents the total negation of Christianity as Christianity." *

This is a sad state of things for a religion which makes the absurd and lofty pretension of being the "Reappearance of Christianity!" The picture was drawn by its own disciples, and its truth is acknowledged by the candid, even among its own ministers. The confessions of one of these shall close our account of this total subversion of Christianity, under the significant title of "Protestantism."

"Oh, Protestantism, has it, then, at last, come to this with thee, that thy disciples protest against all religion? Facts, which are before the eyes of the whole world, declare aloud that this signification of thy name is no idle play upon words, though I know that this confession will excite a flame of indignation against myself." †

* Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity*, p. 429.

† Dr. Jenischuber *Gottesverehrung und Kirche*, § 210.

CATHOLICITY.



XXIII.

Reason.

“Here is the delight
And here the wisdom which did open lay,
The path that has been yearned for so long,
Betwixt the heaven and earth.”

DANTE.

BOLDLY, as it becomes impartial friends of truth, we put to the Catholic Religion, the problems of our “Earnest Seeker,” and demand what it teaches with respect to the nature, value, and dignity of Reason?

The method of arriving at sincere and satisfactory answers to these great questions, is by determining what the Catholic Church teaches to be the effects of Man’s Fall. For we saw in Pro-

testantism, and shall see in Catholicity, that the character of the answers to our inquiries depends on the doctrines held touching the nature and effects of Original Sin.

The authority of the General Councils of the Catholic Church is with its members, beyond all dispute. The last of these, and at the same time the one which, more than any other, has spoken on the question under present consideration, is the Council of Trent. This Council, in speaking of the Fall, says :—

“That the first man, Adam, when he had transgressed the commandment of God in paradise, immediately lost the holiness and justice wherein he was constituted.” *

Two important questions start up here : In what consisted “the holiness and justice wherein man was constituted ?” What were the effects of their “loss ?” The reply to these demands will bring us our desired answers concerning Reason.

In answering the first, we will premise that God created man in the beginning in his own image. He formed him of the earth, breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. The Soul was endowed with Reason

* Sess. v. i.

and Free-Will. By the faculty of Reason man was capable of knowing all that was needful for him to know ; and by his Will of doing all that was required of him to do. Had man been left thus, his happiness would have consisted in the knowledge and love of God as the Author of nature. He need not have been exempt from hunger and thirst, or ignorance, or from the revolt of the passions, or from sickness and death. And God could have left man in this state, for all these inconveniences spring from the natural union of spirit with matter, and in them there is nothing contrary to God's infinite perfections.

But God did not leave man in this state of mere nature. He at the same time added the gift of integrity. This adorned the Soul with all the natural knowledge of which man was capable ; no dangerous ignorance, or defect of judgment, tarnished its beauty. The Will was in possession of perfect liberty, was upright, and tended to good without any inclination to evil. Adam was master of the sensitive appetites, of all the bodily movements ; with an equable temperament, always tranquil, with no tendency to excess, he enjoyed perfect health of body without being subject to infirmities and death.

All these rich gifts, not indeed due to mere

human nature, but tending to complete it in its own order, were held by Adam on condition of his not losing sanctifying grace, which God, at the same moment, superadded.

Sanctifying grace elevated man's nature to a new principle of life and action. It infused into his mind and heart a science and virtues which transcended altogether the order of nature. Man became participator of the Divine Nature, and fitted, one day, to enjoy the Beatific Vision, which consists in gazing upon God's own essence.

Such was the nature of the holiness and justice wherein Adam was constituted before he had transgressed the commandment of God in Paradise.

This explained, we come to the second question : What was the effect of Adam's transgression ?

The effect of Adam's transgression of the commandment of God in the garden of Paradise, was the "immediate loss of the holiness and justice wherein he was constituted." The holiness and justice wherein he was constituted consisted in the gifts of integrity and sanctifying grace. Consequently Adam, by the loss of these, was exposed to ignorance, to the revolt of the passions, sickness and death ; and lost his title, with the virtues connected with it, to the Beatific Vision. In other words, Adam by his transgression fell from

a state to which he was elevated by the gifts and graces of God's pure bounty upon his mere and unadorned nature.

Original sin, therefore, did not efface the image of God stamped upon the Soul. Reason and Free-Will remained, their essence unimpaired, uncorrupted, uninjured. It did not despoil man of any of his merely natural faculties, capacities, or powers. All the rights which absolutely belonged to man's nature, he possessed after the Fall. Man, by Original Sin, lost nothing absolutely necessary to his nature,—since he only fell back into the simply natural state in which he had been originally, or might have been, created.

Adam's transgression left in man no positively evil quality, depraving the substance of our common nature. For there is no sin whatever in man's being exposed to toil and hunger, to ignorance and temptations, to sickness and death. Consequently, God might have created man's nature in the beginning consistently with his divine perfections, as it now exists. For man in his natural condition, with the right use of his Reason, and the good use of his Free-Will, graciously aided as they always are, can attain to the great end for which he was divinely appointed. It follows also, that those who die in the state in

which we now are born, without actual sin, will obtain from the hands of their all-good Creator all the happiness their natural capacities are capable of.

Briefly, man is not, in consequence of the Fall, born with essential depravity, or with the loss of any of his natural faculties, or with the forfeiture of any of his merely natural rights ; what the Fall did was to despoil man of the graces and gifts which were not necessary to his nature, which he had no right to claim, but which were bestowed upon him, over and above his mere nature, from the pure bounty of his benign Creator.

This beautifully reconciles the Sacred History of Man's Fall with the first principles of Reason and with right and honorable views of God.

Grant, says one, that man is in full possession of his Reason, what can it do ? Who knows ? We may after all be told in the classic language of the great Reformer, that "in religious matters Reason is worthless," "Reason is the enemy of all Religion," and "in discussing such matters we should leave the jackass at home !"

Catholicity must give us a definite and explicit answer to this question : What can Reason in its present condition accomplish ?

On two occasions the Catholic Church has

required, as a test of orthodoxy, a subscription to the following proposition: "Reason can with certitude demonstrate the Existence of God, the Spirituality of the Soul, and the Liberty of Man." *

This is a Catholic authoritative decision; and if we grant to Reason the knowledge of these three great truths, we have Reason not as a mere abstract and speculative faculty, but Reason informed and constituted. Grant to Reason the knowledge of these important and primal truths, and Reason has the ability to deduce from them the fundamental principles of Religion, Society, and the State. This is important and demands development.

Give to Reason the knowledge of God, and Reason is able to deduce from this knowledge the principal attributes of God;—God as the Author of the Universe; God as the Upholder of all things; God as the Rewarder of the good and the Punisher of the wicked.

Give to Reason the knowledge of the Spirituality of the Soul, and Reason is able to deduce from this knowledge the Soul's future existence, and its priceless value, excellence and dignity.

Give to Reason the knowledge of the Liberty of Man, and it is able to deduce from this know-

* Bantain, 1840.—Bonnetty, 1855.

ledge man's responsibility to his Creator for all his actions—religious, moral, social, and political.

For these deductions flow immediately from the preceding primary truths. And no one who understands himself, will dispute that Reason is competent to draw from primary truths their evident conclusions.

Reason, therefore, rightly exercised, is able to know with certainty the great principles which underlie Religion, Morals, Social Order, Political Economy, and the Rights of Man. According, then, to sound Catholic teaching, the great ideas and sentiments which constitute the foundations of the noble Institutions of human society, are a part of the domain of Reason.

There is no escape from this without destroying our title of being rational creatures. For what is man when deprived of the knowledge of God? or of the Spirituality of the Soul? or of the Liberty of the Will? Is he a rational creature, a man? By no means. He may look like one, but he wants the head and crown of his manhood.

It is therefore no part of Catholicity to teach the worthlessness of Reason, or to disparage its noble and sublime efforts. It was by the efforts of Reason that the ancient sages and philosophers, in their better moments, raised their minds



REASON.

above the visible world, to the First True, the First Good, the First Fair, the Creator and Exemplar of all things, the only true and eternal God. Led by the light of this sovereign faculty, they discovered many great and most important truths, that have made their writings an everlasting monument of the greatness, grandeur, and glory of human genius. This divine gift has inspired, in both ancient and modern times, the beautiful works of art, the wonderful discoveries of science, and the magnificent inventions of mechanical ingenuity.

Catholicity, therefore, has the highest appreciation of Reason, stimulates its activity, and welcomes with joy its discoveries. "This most tender mother, the Catholic Church, recognizes and justly proclaims," says the reigning sovereign Pontiff, "that among the gifts of Heaven, the most distinguished is that of Reason, by means of which we raise ourselves above the senses, and present in ourselves a certain image of God. Certainly the Church does not condemn the labors of those who wish to know the truth, since God has placed in human nature the desire of laying hold of the true ; nor does she condemn the effort of sound and right Reason, by which the mind is cultivated, nature

is searched, and her more hidden secrets brought to light." *

Consequently, the geologist may dig deep down into the bowels of the earth till he reaches the intensest heats ; the naturalist may decompose matter, examine with the microscope what escapes our unaided observation, and unveil to our astonished gaze the secrets of nature ; the astronomer may multiply his lenses till his ken reaches the empyrean heights of heaven ; the historian may consult the annals of nations, and unriddle the hieroglyphics of the monuments of bygone ages ; the moralist may expose the most delicate folds of the human heart, and probe it to its very core ; the philosopher may, with his critical faculty, observe and define the laws which govern man's sovereign Reason ; and Catholicity is not alarmed ! Catholicity invokes, encourages, solicits your boldest efforts ; for at the end of all your earnest researches, you will find that the fruit of your labors confirm her teachings, and that your genuine discoveries add new gems to the crown of truth which encircles her heaven-inspired brow.

Our indulgent readers will not be displeased if we relate an example illustrative of this truth.

Professor H. was distinguished for his research-

* Pius IX. Letter to the Bishops of Austria, 1856.

es and discoveries in the field of Natural History. For these his writings merited translation and publication in France. One of his discoveries was that of a family of animalculæ. One day, observing these by the aid of a microscope, and with more than usual attention, he perceived that they had a perfect system of an organized government. There was a chief, with subordinate officers, each having his own duties to perform, and all acting in unison and perfect order.

This unexpected discovery surprised the Professor, and led him to turn his observation abroad upon the wide field of nature. Every where, to his satisfaction, he found the same unity, the same laws, the same harmony, the same form of government, from the meanest floweret or insect to the vast planetary systems of worlds. A thought occurred to him at this moment, whether this universal form of government, found in all nature, was not a stamp and similitude of nature's Author; and whether, if God had made known his will to his rational creatures, he would not display the same laws, the same government, but only in a higher and more perfect form.

Now, this was no small stride for our Professor to make, for the truth is, he was bred a Protestant, and on arriving at the age when men are accus-

tomed to do their own thinking, he found that this religion neither answered his Reason nor satisfied his conscience. He therefore abandoned the religion of the Sixteenth century, began to read the works of French philosophers, gave up all ideas of Christianity, and ended in becoming a Deist.

What now ? After having discovered this law running through all nature, his curiosity was excited to see whether he could find it in any one of the prevailing systems of religious belief. Of the dissensions and degrading doctrines of Protestantism, he knew sufficient from his own experience. There was no way left but to examine Catholicity. His acquaintance with the Catholic Church was very slight, and no priest residing in his village, on inquiry he found a Catholic in the place who was prepared to give him the information he desired. The Professor was gratified to find in the Catholic Church the same organization, the same laws, the same form of government which he had found in all nature. His conclusion was that the Catholic religion had for its author the great Author of all nature and of the vast universe.

What next ? Too sincere not to acknowledge the truth when known, too earnest not to be faithful to the light he had received and his convictions, our Professor starts for the metropolis, to have an

interview with the Catholic Bishop. He introduces himself to the Bishop as Mr. H. On taking a chair, it occurs to the mind of the Bishop that the gentleman's name was the same as that of a celebrated professor of Natural History, and he put the question, whether he was that Professor. Modest, like all truly learned men, he replied, "Sometimes persons call me so." But he continued under feelings of excitement because of the important nature of his visit, and, addressing the Bishop, he asked him if he had any reasons why he should not become a Catholic. The Bishop was not a little startled at such a question, and replied in his usual bland and winning way: "Why, Professor, I have no reasons why you should not become a Catholic, but many and every reason why you should." Understanding the purpose of the Professor's visit, and curious to know what had turned his attention to the Catholic Church, the Bishop asked him, before going further, what it was that first directed his thoughts to Catholicity? "Bugs! bugs! bugs!" replied the Professor, quickly.

"Bugs!" repeated the astonished prelate. "What have these to do with the truth of the Catholic religion?" Thereupon the Professor related the facts which we have just narrated,

and the Bishop found them satisfactory as well as amusing. In due time the Professor became a member of that Church whose doctrines are consonant with the dictates of Reason,

“ Whose proofs are every where.
Whate'er we hear or see, whate'er doth lie
Round us in nature: all that the structure of
Science, or in Art, hath found or wrought.” *

* De Vere.

XXIV.

Reason.

"Sure, He that made us with such large discourse,
Looking before, and after, gave us not
That capability and godlike Reason
To fust in us unused."

SHAKESPEARE.

ACCORDING to Catholicity, then, man was not deprived by the fall of Adam, of Reason, nor did it render Reason worthless, for it is still in possession of certain great truths, upon the knowledge of which our claim of being rational creatures, and the institutions of civilized society, depend.

There may be some desirous to push their inquiries still further, and who might ask: What is the precise value of Reason, face to face, with the truths of Religion? Do Reason and the

Catholic Religion stand as in the case of Protestantism, in hostile attitude towards each other? Does Catholicity look with an unfavorable eye on the application of Reason to the heaven-inspired truths of Religion?

The Catholic Religion teaches that the exercise of Reason necessarily precedes the acceptance of the truths of Religion, and that it is an obligation laid upon Reason to inquire diligently, and to be certain that those truths which are proposed to its belief, have God for their Author, before it gives its assent.

Subscription to the following proposition has repeatedly been required of Catholics, whose published opinions seemed to undervalue Reason in the interests of faith. It runs thus:—

“The exercise of Reason precedes faith, and, with the aid of revelation and grace, leads to faith.” *

Before an act of faith can be made, Reason must apprehend what is proposed for belief; this is one exercise of Reason. And, after this apprehension, the examination, if the evidence of what is proposed for belief was truly revealed by God, is another exercise of Reason. Faith, therefore, is not an act contrary to Reason, nor independent

* Abbé Bautain, 1840.—A. Bonnetty, 1856.

of it ; but in strict accordance with its laws, and wholly impossible unless preceded by its exercise.

They err greatly, therefore, who imagine that " Catholics have no right, on their principles, to address Reason at all on the subject of Religion." They are equally ignorant of the nature of genuine faith, and attribute to Catholicity the errors and absurdities of Protestantism, which she in times long gone by, exposed, refuted, and publicly condemned.

Faith, therefore, is an act which begins in the intelligence, calls forth its exercise, and cannot take place unless on reasonable, certain, and sufficient grounds. Once more, earnest inquirer, give ear to the Visible Head of the Catholic Church, instructing " the Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops and Bishops of the Catholic world," on this most important point.

" Lest human Reason should be deceived in a matter of so great moment, it behooves it to inquire diligently concerning Divine Revelation, in order that it may be made certain that God has spoken, and also in order that it may exercise, according to the most wise teaching of the Apostles, a ' reasonable obedience.' Who is ignorant that it is our duty to place all our faith in God when He speaks, and that nothing is more consonant with

Reason than to give its assent, and firmly adhere to those things of which it has been made certain that they have been revealed by God, who cannot be deceived or deceive."

They make equally a great mistake who suppose that "the Catholic Church exacts a blind and inconsiderate obedience to her teachings." The Church is fully aware that no other than a "reasonable obedience" is worthy of a rational creature, and acceptable to his Creator. A practical illustration will make this point plain.

What are the preparatory steps to be taken in order to be received into the fold of the Catholic Church? In the first place, the candidate is examined to discover whether he knows what are the important doctrines of the Catholic Religion. If these be distinctly known, then it is required to be known also on what precise grounds these truths are proposed for belief. Is there a deficiency of knowledge in this respect, the reception is delayed, instructions are imparted, until the truths proposed for belief are well known, and the mind is without any doubt of their having been revealed by God. Christianity is a Religion addressed to man's intelligence and moral nature, and only an enlightened and free assent to its divine truths, can make Christians. As long as there remains a

doubt on the mind, no one can become a Catholic, for Christian faith excludes even the shadow of a doubt. Equally jealous of the rights of Reason and the homage due to the Divine Truths confided to her care by her Divine Founder, the Catholic Church accepts no other than a "reasonable obedience."

Any one who knows how members are received among the Protestant sects, knows full well what indifference is shown to enlightening the Reason in regard to the great truths of the Christian Religion. For the most part, little or no pains are taken to discover what the candidates believe, or on what grounds their belief rests. Many are received without even once reading their formulas of faith ; among others who have no such formulas, a vague notion of Christianity, and an irrational confidence, answer for rational convictions and the reverence due to its great and solemn truths. Among some of the more popular sects of Protestantism, the reception of Christianity is a sheer piece of fanaticism, for it takes place at a time when Reason is drowned by a wild and extravagant excitement of the passions.

"A gilded pill !" some one may, in the way of an objection, exclaim. "Once admit the authority of the Roman Church, and you will be forced

to assent blindly to whatever she teaches, and, with its overpowering weight, it will stultify your intelligence, and crush from the mind all free thought."

Patience ! good Reader, and do not lay to our charge the desire to raise objections in order to display a vain skill in their refutation. Sincerely, these are not our objections ; every one is taken, not out of our own imagination, or from fusty old books, but word for word, from living authorities antagonistic to Catholicity. We bespeak a little indulgence.

Men's minds must be strangely disordered to see in others only their own special miseries ; to charge upon others what is but their own wretchedness, while they, with a peculiar self-complacency, imagine themselves happy !

If Protestantism emancipates the intelligence and gives place to free thought, why is it that the most intellectually gifted and independent minds of the age cast off Protestantism and embrace Catholicity ? As an illustration, we have only to cite of Germany such names as Hallar, Phillips, Hurter ; or, of England,—Newman, Allies, Wilberforce ; or, of America,—Brownson, Haldeman, Anderson. Is it at all likely, is it reasonable to suppose, that men of this order of mind, of this

temper, and who were born and bred under the glorious emancipation and freedom afforded by Protestantism, should, with their eyes open, embrace and continue in a Religion whose influence benumbs our intellectual faculties, and whose authority crushes out all free thought? Regarding this matter from a rational point of view, there is a good deal more reason to believe that these men, with a large body of converts to the Catholic Religion, became Catholics in order to emancipate their Reason from the violent thralldom exercised over it by Protestantism.

The testimony of one whose courage as Protestant, or as Catholic, never faltered to express the honest convictions of his mind, or its freest thoughts, are here in point.

“The struggle between faith and Reason is something wholly foreign to the Catholic mind,” and ten years’ experience of the Catholic religion gave him the right to say so. “And the real Catholic,” he continues, “finds it hard, unless he has been bred a Protestant, even to conceive of it, because Catholicity, though it requires us to do violence to the flesh, never requires us to do violence to Reason. Catholicity is not rationalistic, but it is a rational religion, and at every step satisfies the demands of the most rigid Reason. We

were told so before we came into the Church, but we could hardly believe it ; and even when we were permitted to enter, we did not doubt but we should still find something of that interior struggle between faith and Reason, which had rendered us so miserable as a Protestant, so hard is it for a Protestant mind to conceive the possibility of perfect harmony between faith in the supernatural and the dictates of Reason. We have not thus far been troubled with any struggles of this sort, and we are unable to conceive how as long as we remain Catholics we can be, because in Catholicity all has a sufficient reason, is sure to have a purpose worthy of itself, and nothing is required to be believed but on adequate authority, and thus the demands of the highest Reason is satisfied." *

"The truth is," says another illustrious convert to the Catholic Church, "that the world, knowing nothing of the blessings of the Catholic faith, and prophesying nothing but ill concerning it, fancies that a convert, after the first fervor is over, feels nothing but disappointment, weariness, and offence in his new religion, and is secretly desirous of retracing his steps. . . . That there can be peace and joy, and knowledge and freedom, and spiritual strength in the Church, is a thought far

* O. A. Brownson. Review, 1853.

beyond its imagination ; for it regards her simply as a frightful conspiracy against the happiness of man, seducing her victims by specious professions, and, when they are once hers, caring nothing for the misery which breaks upon them, so that by any means she may detain them in bondage. Accordingly it conceives we are in perpetual warfare with our Reason, fierce objections ever rising, and we forcibly repressing them. . . . It fancies that the Reason is ever rebelling like the flesh ; that doubt, like concupiscence, is elicited by every sight and sound, and the temptation insinuates itself in every page of letter-press, and through the very voice of a Protestant polemic. But, my dear brethren, if these are your thoughts, you are simply in error. Trust me, rather than the world, when I tell you that it is no difficult thing for a Catholic to believe ; and that unless he grievously mismanages himself, the difficult thing is for him to doubt. He has received a gift which makes faith easy ; it is not without an effort, a miserable effort, that any one who has received that gift unlearns to believe. He does violence to his mind, not in exercising, but in withholding faith." *

Thus the groundless charges against Catholicity are thrown back and fastened upon their

* Newman's Discourses to Mixed Congregations ; Dis. xi.

authors, and they cannot, with their utmost skill and ingenuity, clear themselves of them.

The idea of Reason being fettered, or its activity diminished, by the Christian faith, never enters the Catholic mind. This is also evident from the pages of history. The antagonism between Reason and faith is nowhere found among the Ancient Fathers and Doctors of the Church. They regarded Reason and Christianity as existing in a most beautiful accord. The scholastics were so far from the thought of contradiction between Reason and Revelation that they endeavored to construct an entire defence of Christianity on the basis of Reason. It was the lights of the Reformation who first broached the idea of an hostility between Reason and Christianity ; and they did this partly out of hostility to the scholastics, and still more in consequence of their irrational exposition of the nature and effects of original sin, in which some denied to man even the faculty of Reason, and others, whatever of Reason they left to him, as an inheritance, taught that it was at enmity with God and Religion.

It is not only a fact of Catholic experience confirmed by the history of the Church, that Catholicity fortifies Reason, enlarges its horizon, and elevates its vision, but the relations existing between the truths of Reason and the transcendent

truths of Revelation, as taught by the Catholic Religion, prove that this must in the nature of things be so.

When Reason has once made itself certain of the evidence of a Divine Revelation, it then appropriates the truths which this reveals by its assent, and exercises its powers on them. For although the mysteries of Religion are beyond our powers of explanation, yet they each present, more or less, an intelligible side to our natural Reason. And so far as they are intelligible, Reason may exercise itself most profitably in tracing out their harmony with its dictates ; their influence on the minds and hearts of men, and on society ; and, by devoutly meditating on them, it may penetrate farther into their meaning, bring out their hidden analogy with other truths, and clothe itself with their transcendent beauty.

It was this research of the relations of Nature and the truths of Reason to Revealed Truths, that occupied the master minds of Sacred Science. And this research of Reason the Catholic Religion always has encouraged and sanctioned.

This will be placed beyond all doubt by the following citation of the same Encyclical Letter of Pius IX., quoted on pages 209-210. Speaking of those men " who arrogate to themselves the name

of philosophers, and prate about faith gainsaying Reason," he says :

"It is certain that there is nothing more foolish, nothing more impious, and that nothing more contrary to Reason can be imagined or thought of, than the opinion which supposes that the Christian faith gainsays Reason. Although faith is above Reason, nevertheless no discord, no opposition can ever be found betwixt them, since both faith and Reason spring from one and the same unchangeable and eternal fountain of truth, the Almighty and Eternal God ; and therefore, they afford mutual help to each other, so that right Reason demonstrates, upholds, and defends faith ; and faith on the other hand emancipates Reason from all errors, wonderfully enlightens, confirms, and perfects Reason with the knowledge of Divine Things." *

Catholicity, therefore, regards Reason and Truth as twin sisters born of the one primal source of all light. Faith with its supernal light mingles its beams with those of Reason, solves the dark enigmas which tormented its existence, and opens to it the only path to its divine destination.

"Faith's virtue to our vision knits ; and thus
Supported, lifts us above ourselves,
That on the sovereign essence which it wells from,
We have the power to gaze." †

* Eneye, 1846.

† Dante.

XXV.

Free-Will.

"Supreme of gifts, which God, creating, gave
Of his free bounty, sign most evident
Of goodness, and in His account most prized,
Was liberty of will; the boon wherewith
All intellectual creatures, and them sole
He hath endowed."

DANTE.

THE teaching of the Catholic Religion in regard to Free-Will, is already sufficiently explained when we consider that Reason implies the freedom of the Will. For the simple faculty to know, or the knowledge of first principles, does not suffice to constitute man a reasonable being; he needs for that also the liberty of choice. As then Free-Will is a constituent part of man's rational nature, and this being fully explained in the preceding chapter, it is not necessary to enter at large on this point of our present inquiry.

In the teaching of the Catholic Church on this subject, we shall find the same concert and harmony between Free-Will and Grace, as we did between Reason and Faith. For as Revelation supposes Reason, so does Grace suppose Free-Will. And as Reason is able, by the exercise of its natural abilities, to gain the knowledge of certain great and primary truths, so is the Free-Will able by its exertions to practise certain noble and even heroic virtues.

Let us then, as our first step, establish the fact that the Catholic doctrine teaches that man is in possession of Free-Will. In the sixth Session of the Council of Trent will be found the following :—

“ If any one saith, that since Adam’s sin, the Free-Will of man is lost and extinguished ; or, that it is a thing without a reality, a figment, in fine, introduced into the Church by Satan, let him be anathema.” *

Catholicity, in claiming for man the possession of Free-Will and condemning the errors of Protestantism, proves herself to be the upholder of the dignity of human nature, the friend of liberty, and the defender of the rights of man. For without Free-Will, liberty is impossible, there is no such

* Canon v.

thing as rights, and man becomes the passive instrument of an irresistible and impenetrable destiny. Would men but open their eyes to truth, they would discover that the anathemas of the Catholic Church were never pronounced except against the most pernicious and detestable errors ; errors subversive of all rational religion, inimical to good morals, destructive to society, and detrimental to man's best interests. It will be also found, that her decisions tend to the greatest glory and honor of Almighty God, confirm and sustain the highest appreciations of man's nature, and are favorable to the greatest happiness of the human race.

Holding to the fact that man is in possession of this freedom of his will, the Catholic Church must necessarily teach that man possesses the ability to practise virtue, and is responsible for his actions. Let us confirm this statement.

In the decrees of the Council of Trent we find the following, which touches on the point now under consideration :—

“ Although Free-Will, attenuated and inclined as it was in its powers (by original sin), was by no means extinguished.” *

Now how are these words, “attenuated and

* Sess. vi.

inclined," in relation to man's will, to be understood? Evidently they are to be understood in the same sense that "the loss of justice and holiness" were understood in regard to Reason. They are to be understood not as conveying the idea that man's will, by original sin, was "attenuated and inclined" from what it was in his supposed state of mere nature, but "attenuated and inclined" in view of the state to which he was elevated by the gifts and graces bestowed on him over and above his essential nature.

This is confirmed by the fact that in the first draft of this decree, the word "wounded" was struck out, and the words above put in its place, in order not to convey the idea of man's nature having suffered by original sin any thing more than the loss of the gratuitous graces and gifts bestowed on it. And it is in this view the words "injured," "wounded," "deteriorated," and such like expressions should be understood when used in speaking of the effects of the fall of Adam.

This becomes more evident from the following propositions among the forty-one errors of Luther, condemned by Pope Leo the Tenth, 1520. The thirty-sixth runs thus :—

"Free-Will after sin is a thing with only a name ; and when it does all that it can, it sins mortally."

It is still more evident from the following propositions of Baius, condemned by Saint Pius V.

“Free-Will, without the grace of God, is able to do nothing but sin.”

“All the works of unbelievers are sins, and the virtues of the philosophers are vices.”

“He agrees with Pelagius, who acknowledges any good, that is, any good that takes its rise from the sole powers of nature.” *

It follows plainly, from the condemnation of these propositions by the Pontiffs of the Catholic Church, that she holds in just abhorrence the errors which they inculcate. It is also evident that she teaches that “human nature is not altogether good for nothing,” but has the power to do good, to practise virtue, and hence man is responsible for his actions and conduct.

In upholding the truth of man’s possessing this “supreme of gifts, liberty of will,” her voice, as ever, is consonant with the inmost voice of the consciousness of every man’s breast, which is thus expressed by the great poet of Christian faith :—

“Ye have that virtue in you, whose just voice
Uttereth counsel, and whose word should keep
The threshold of assent. Here is the source,
Whence cause of merit in you is derived ;

* Baius.

E'en as the affections, good or ill, she takes,
Or severs, winnow'd as the chaff. Those men
Who reasoning, went to depth profoundest, mark'd
That innate freedom ; and were thence induced
To leave their moral teachings to the world."*

The doctrine of Catholicity, on the Free-Will of man, gives the basis for all laws, all legislation, and for the whole structure of human society. Whereas, let the doctrines of that creed hostile to Catholicity, called Protestantism, be followed but for a moment, and the whole of society would be overthrown from its foundations ; the support of every authority would be undermined ; and the fountains of all personal, social, political, moral, and religious virtue would be dried up. Not only does every man owe to Catholicity a debt of gratitude for upholding the dignity of his nature, but society owes to the Catholic defence of man's liberty of Will, its existence, its civilization, and preservation.

A Catholic may, consistently with his religion, claim the virtues, the deeds of self-sacrifice, and acts of exalted heroism of every nation, of every clime, of every religion, as a part of the inheritance of humanity. His religion extends his sympathies and enlarges his heart, by identifying his nature

* Dante.

with all that is great, noble, and grand in the history of the race. His voice, to use the language of St. Augustine, may "join with the shepherds on the mountains, the poets in the theatres, the unlearned in the circuses, the learned in their libraries, the masters in the schools, the priests in the temples, and the human race over the whole world, in proclaiming that man is endowed by his Creator with the noble gift of Liberty of Will."

XXVI.

Human Nature.

"In Catholicity all is placed in evident relations with Human Nature and the history of the Universe."

DE MAISTRE.

IN treating of the relations of Catholicity to Human Nature, we should keep in mind the doctrines taught on the same subject by Protestantism.

Orthodox Protestantism teaches that Human Nature is in its very essence wholly corrupt, so that man can think nothing but evil, can love nothing but evil, and can do nothing but evil.

But what is evil? "Evil," to take Webster's definition, "is a deviation of a moral agent from the rules of conduct prescribed to him by God."

Evil then, is the voluntary deviation from

God's law. Evil is not, therefore, a substance, a being, or an existence, but a mode of existence—Evil is the perversion of being or existence.

Existence cannot be conceived otherwise than as good, without outraging the divine perfections of the Creator. For God, and He alone, is the Author of all real existences. To think of the essence of our being, or existence, as wholly corrupt, or evil, or evil at all, is to make God the Author of that which is contrary to his Nature.

Man is, and can but be, essentially good ; and the doctrine of essential, or total depravity, taught by Protestantism, makes God the Author of evil.

A Free Agent may violate the laws of his being, and pervert habitually its activities, but these remain, and ever will remain unimpaired in their essence. Satan is a fallen Angel, but still an Angel.

Man therefore is essentially good ; endowed with Reason, whose object is truth ; and with Free Will, whose object is the good. Reason seeks only to know the true ; Free-Will only relishes the good. If Reason embraces error, it is always under the appearance of truth ; if Free-Will relishes evil, it is always under the appearance of good.

Man is good in possession of all his faculties,

which retain all their natural power to act in accordance with the great end of his being.

Religion, therefore, must regard man as an intelligent and moral being, and act in accordance with the laws of his mental and moral constitution. The structure of Religion must find its foundations in the indestructible elements of Human Nature.

If the Catholic Religion be consistent with her own principles, she must presuppose Human Nature in all her operations ; accept all its normal instincts ; and adapt herself to its various necessities.

The attitude of the Catholic Religion towards Human Nature may be seen and appreciated from the following fact of Ecclesiastical History. On the conversion of the English people to Christianity by Saint Augustine, the question arose, what was to be done with the Pagan Temples ? The point was referred to the Sovereign Pontiff, whose reply was as follows :

“The Temples of the gods are not to be destroyed, but to be cleared of their idols, purified with holy water, adorned with altars enclosing relics of God’s Saints. For if the Temples were well-built, they ought to be consecrated as houses of prayer of the true God, in order that the people,

seeing their old Temples reclaimed, may lay off their errors with all their hearts, and acknowledge and pray to the true God, and attend so much the readier at their old places of Worship.” *

The Catholic Religion treats in the same manner Human Nature. Human Nature is well-built, and consequently not to be destroyed, but rectified, blessed, adorned with celestial virtues, and consecrated to the service of the true, living God. On the same principle the Catholic Church has changed several of the pagan orgies into Christian festivities. Just as we find paintings of Orpheus playing on his lyre, and charming therewith the birds and beasts of the forest, in the chapels of the early Christians in the Catacombs. For they saw in this a truth illustrative of our Lord, who by the gracious words that flowed from His lips, softened the hard hearts of sinners, and brought together into one fold a people drawn from among all the nations of the world.† For the instinct of worship is natural to man; Paganism perverted it; and Christianity rectified it by directing it to its true object.

Thus Catholicity embraces all the human mind, accepts every truth, and welcomes all the instincts of our nature, for being conscious of their

* Bede i. p. 27.

† Northcote's Roman Catacombs.

divine origin, she knows full well that these cannot but tend to increase her honor and beauty, and the glory of God.

How can it be otherwise, for Religion without the instincts and activities of Human Nature, would be a baseless fabric, a mere dream. Since Human Nature serves to Religion as the stock does to the graft, the more vigorous Human Nature is, the more rapidly will Religion develop itself, display its celestial beauty, and bring forth more abundantly its divine fruit.

Furthermore, there is not only a beautiful analogy between the revealed truths and profound mysteries of Religion and Human Nature, and so recognized by the Church in her exactest formulas, for instance, "as the rational soul and body is one man, so is God and Man one Christ," which is found in the Athanasian Creed ; but there is also an element, or faculty of Human Nature, which serves as a basis for the most wonderful gifts of the Holy Ghost. For Religion adds no new faculty to our Nature ; in this regard Man was complete at the instant of his creation. Religion enlightens and elevates the intelligence, rectifies and strengthens the Will ; and when this is done, as it sometimes is, in a wonderful way, the wonders we read of in the lives of the Saints come to pass.

For these wonders are not contrary to Man's Nature, nor altogether independent of his nature, but God acting in and through Human Nature in a wonderful way.

“We are not disposed to question the harmony of Catholic doctrine with natural instinct:” says an eminent Catholic Theologian; “on the contrary, we believe that nature, in its purest condition, is the foundation on which the structure of revelation reposes, because God, the author of both, has planted in the human breast sentiments and affections which prepare us for his supernatural communications. The moral principles, which are designated by the name of Natural Law, are the basis on which the Divine Architect has planted revelation. Nature, chastened and directed by it, is worthy of its Divine Parent, who has wisely provided for himself a testimony in its instincts. When the human mind, dazzled by the splendor of the Deity, turns towards created objects, and, charmed by their seductive features, concentrates its affections in them, the natural sense of the power and greatness of the Creator, although for a time obscured and deadened, is not altogether extinct, so that in sudden emergencies even the votary of idolatry gives spontaneous expressions to Nature’s voice, recognizing her Author, as Tertul-

lian long since observed. Not to the Capitol does he turn, nor is it Jupiter whom he invokes ; but with eyes uplifted towards the heavens, he cries out, O God ! Well does the great apologist of Christianity exclaim on this occasion, ‘O testimony of the soul, which is naturally Christian.’”*

This need be no cause for surprise, for the “Word by whom all things were made which were made, in whom was the life, and the life was the light of men,” is the same Word which was Incarnated. The Word-Creator cannot contradict the Word-Incarnate. God cannot contradict God.

Human Nature when free from prejudice gives unprompted utterances in its better moments to doubts and cravings, that the teachings of Catholicity alone can answer or its life satisfy. This truth is made palpable by the following passage, of the import of which, at the time it was written, and likely now, the author is unaware.

“Where now sounds the persuasive voice that by its melody imparadises my heart, and so affirms its origin in heaven ? Where shall I hear words such as in elder ages drew men to leave all and follow, — father and mother, houses and lands, wife and child ? Where shall I find these august laws of moral being so pronounced, as to fill my

* Dr. Francis Patrick Kenrick.

ear, and I feel ennobled by the offer of my uttermost action and passion? The test of the true faith, certainly, should be its power to charm and command the soul, as the laws of Nature control the activity of the hands,—so commanding that we find pleasure and honor in obeying.”*

O testimony of the soul naturally Catholic! What your soul yearns to hear, and all true souls, is the voice of its Spiritual Mother, the Holy Catholic Church. The persuasive voice, and the words of elder ages you desire to hear are hers, and the august laws of moral being she so pronounces, that were you once to give your ear to her voice, more tender, more maternal than a mother's, it would be filled, and you too would feel ennobled by the offer of your uttermost action and passion. Apply but your own test of the true faith, and unless you wilfully close your eyes, you must see this.

Where but in her bosom do you find, from elder ages to our own day, men and women, of every nation, of every rank, of every age, leaving all, father and mother, houses and lands, and offering up their uttermost action and passion, and feel ennobled while so doing? Is not this fact written on every page of the annals of the Catholic Church,

* Emerson.

and borne witness to in our own streets by the Sisters of Charity? How explain this incontestable fact, unless it be that the Catholic Church alone has "the power to charm and command the soul, as the laws of Nature control the activity of the hands,—so commanding that we find pleasure and honor in obeying?" Did it never occur to the author of the above passage, and those who share the same thoughts and sympathies, to apply their test of the true faith to the Catholic Church?

We accept unreservedly their own test of faith, and reaffirm that a Religion that does not awaken in man a sublime enthusiasm, elicit deeds of lofty and heroic sacrifice, and imparadise the heart, fails to affirm its origin in heaven, and comes from elsewhere.

Most assuredly a Religion which can count its martyrs by millions, and whose noble children glory in strewing fresh branches of palm at her feet, must have so pronounced the august laws of moral being, as to fill their ear, and make them feel ennobled by the offer of their uttermost action and passion.

It is a wonder that it has not occurred to these men to ask the question how the Catholic Church exercises her authority over two hundred and more millions of men! What power can unite in wor-

ship at the same altar nations which differ as widely as the Italian, the German, the Spaniard, the Englishman, the Frenchman, the American, the Mexican, every nation, people, tribe and color under the sun ?

Is it public opinion or civil power that enables her to do this ? But in the elder ages Catholicity triumphed in spite of public opinion and civil power. It is in spite of public opinion, the bitterest and cruellest persecution, and in our day, that ten millions of Catholics remain steadfast in their obedience to the Church in the British Islands.

Look at this matter nearer home, and the truth will appear still more evident. Every man that is born here, is free-born, free to embrace whatever Religion he pleases ; he need embrace none, if he can get along without any. Those who reach our shores share the same freedom. Every body knows that to be a Catholic in these United States is no title to public favor, no mark that commands public respect, no distinction which excites envy. Yet in face of all this, three millions of Catholics remain more attached to their holy faith than to all else besides !

“ Superstition and prejudice ! ” but then why do we find men most distinguished for their intellectual gifts, learning, and moral worth, the

stanchest defenders of Catholicity? How is it that men whose prejudices, education, sentiments, interests—men also of intelligence, virtue, learning, piety—condemn Protestantism of error, and reverse the movement of the sixteenth century, by giving in their allegiance to the authority of the Catholic Church?

It is as plain to intelligent and impartial minds as the light of the sun is to the eye at noon-day, that no kaiser, no monarch, no civil authority, no prejudice or superstition, can produce such invariable convictions, such heroic actions, such world-wide and disinterested testimony in its favor. This all-embracing sway is the sole prerogative of Truth, of Divine Truth. And the only rational explanation which can be given of the deep-rooted conviction, and the deathless attachment of Catholics for their faith, is that it springs from the free and enlightened homage of the undivided intellect and conscience of men to the majesty of Divine Truth. It is the spontaneous testimony of Human Nature in favor of Catholicity.

We have cordially accepted the offered test of the true faith, and on its application have discovered that the Catholic Religion alone proves itself genuine. What hinders these gifted men from seeing this? Is it that they have not yet entered

on a full possession of their intelligence to recognize it?—or has a deep and all-pervading skepticism so palsied their minds' energies, that they have lost the ability to embrace the Truth?

Heaven grant that their splendid abilities may yet be crowned with Catholic faith, and their honest searches after truth rewarded with the sweet fruits of Catholic piety.

XXVII.

Human Nature.

"O Spirit! who go'st on to blessedness
With the same limbs that clad thee in thy birth."—DANTE.

THE friendly relations of Catholicity with Human Nature are made evident by the best of proofs, the acknowledgments of her opponents.

One party of these do not hesitate to declare that "The Catholic Religion is a logical system ; it addresses itself to the intellect ; but it is destitute of life, feeling, piety. The Romish Religion is not the religion of the heart," they say, "but of the logical faculty."

Grant this objection, what follows ? What is logic ? "Logic," says Dr. Watts, "is the art of thinking and reasoning justly." It follows clearly, then, that Catholicity is the Religion adapted to

men who think and reason justly, men whose intellectual faculties are ripe, men of intelligence.

That the Catholic Religion is what these objectors say, logical, a perfect system of kindred truths centred in a sublime unity, and not an incoherent mass of contradictory opinions, such as every mature mind must despise, can easily be established.

“The Catholic faith,” so says a Protestant writer, “if we concede its first axiom, which neither the Lutherans nor the Reformed, nor even the followers of Socinius denied, is as consistent and as consecutive as the books of Euclid. The entire Romish religion is founded on the fact of a supernatural revelation, designed for the whole human race, which, as it embraces all generations, future as present, can never be interrupted ; otherwise the sublime work, accomplished by a God-man, and sealed by his blood, would be exposed, which is contrary to the hypothesis, to suffer and eventually to perish by the weakness and errors of men. These consequences of the first principles are indisputable, and there is not a single article of Catholic belief which is not justifiable, by the closest deduction, from this principle.” *

“We, Protestants as we are,” says another

* Gfrörer. *Kritischer Geschichte des Uehestenthumes*. B. 1, p. 15.

writer, in speaking of the Catholic Religion, "when we take in view this wondrous edifice, from its base to its summit, must acknowledge that we never beheld a system which, the foundations once laid, is laid upon such certain, secure principles ; whose structure displays in its minutest details, so much art, penetration, and consistency, and whose plan is so proof against the severest criticism of the most profound science.*

Guizot the celebrated Protestant historian, in comparing the Catholic Religion with the Protestant, which "did not fully comprehend and accept its own principles, or effects," says, "Catholics could point to their first principles and boldly admit all the consequences that might result from them." †

A celebrated Scotch metaphysician gave the substance of this in reply to some ministers who visited him in his last sickness. "Gentlemen," said he, when they pressed the subject of religion on his attention, "were I a Christian it is not to you I should address myself ; but to priests of the Catholic Church ; for with them I find premises and conclusion, and this I know you cannot offer." ‡

* Marheineke Symbolik, p. 705.

† Hist. Europ. Civil

‡ Compitum.

The conclusion from this testimony is a very simple and undeniable one. It is, that to become a Christian on Catholic principles it is not required to "set aside" or to "strangle Reason;" on the contrary, the Catholic Religion solicits its just exercise, welcomes its sincere efforts, and answers admirably to all its best convictions. It tells us in plain language that the Catholic Religion opens to men the only way by which they can, in strict accordance with the laws of intelligence, become Christians. It proclaims a very important thing to be known, to wit, that Catholicity is the only Religion for intelligent minds, and an enlightened people. It is precisely the Religion our "Earnest Seeker," in his somewhat defiant yet honest language, demanded.

Another class of opponents to Catholicity gravely inform us that "the Catholic Religion is the religion of the senses and the passions; it seeks only to excite the feelings and captivate the imagination; its appeals are addressed to the sentimental side of man's nature."

Admit that the Catholic Religion attracts the senses, captivates the imagination, and answers to the sentimental side of man's nature, and you will be obliged, if consistent, to acknowledge that Catholicity answers to an essential and most important part of Human Nature.

But, in all candor, should not true Religion answer to the sentimental side of man's nature? Is the heart less the work of God than the head? Are the senses, the imagination, the feelings, in one word, the heart, to take no part in the worship of their all-wise Giver? Let us give place here to a more able pen, and that of a non-Catholic, to advocate our cause.

“It is of great importance that religion should be an affection of the heart as well as a conviction of the understanding; because it is to govern in a soul which is agitated by various passions, which is powerfully solicited by the world, and which is prone to contract a sensual taint and sordid character. These strong and dangerous propensities of Human Nature are not to be counteracted by mere speculations of the intellect. The heart must be engaged on the side of God and duty. To subdue the love of the world a nobler love must be kindled within us. A new and better channel must be formed for this desire which we would turn from unworthy ends. We cannot, if we would, extinguish the affections. Our safety consists in directing their force and energy to noble and elevated objects—to God, to virtue, and to immortality.” *

* Dr. Channing's Memoirs, p. 375.

“Human nature will never be satisfied with a system which does not awaken sentiment and emotion. Man has a thirst for excitement; he delights in the exercise of his affections, and his Creator can hardly be supposed to give him a religion which contradicts this essential part of his nature.” *

Conceding, then, the charges of both these parties against the Catholic Religion, it follows, according to their own showing, that it is perfectly adapted to all man's nature. For, putting together the intellectual and sentimental faculties and affections of men, you have Human Nature whole and complete. Catholicity, therefore, is that Religion which links itself to all the faculties of the mind, appropriates all the instincts of Human Nature, and by thus concurring with the work of the Creator, affirms its own divine origin.

The indulgent reader must not think us capacious if we give room here to another objection to the Catholic religion, since it springs up naturally in this place.

A class of objectors assert that “Catholicity is nothing but heathenism. Did not the early Fathers corrupt the Gospel by their study of heathen authors, especially Plato, and the Doctors of

* Ibid, p. 379.

mediæval times by their study of Aristotle ? The Romish religion is nothing else than pagan idolatry tempered here and there with a dash of Christianity."

No one is so ignorant as to need to be told that the heathen religion was abject, degrading, and dreadfully corrupt. Yet, even the heathen were men created by the same hands which fashioned us. They were born precisely like ourselves, endowed with Reason and Free-Will. They possessed the same religious nature and aspirations, as men born in our day. The substance of the great truths of the true Religion formed a part of the natural inheritance of Reason, and the principal moral laws were engraven upon the tablets of their hearts.

The heathen were not altogether God-forsaken. One may trace, without great difficulty, with a greater or less degree of distinctness, certain great dogmas of Christianity; for instance, the fall of angels and that of man, the expectation of a Redeemer, "the Desired of nations," the necessity of sacrifice, the communion of the living with the departed, and connected with these, faint types of certain Christian rites and ceremonies."

Now, what seems reasonable and natural to anticipate is, that if God should deign to give to

men a final and perfect system of religious truth, it would necessarily include and complete all the natural truths, and the truths received from an invisible source, under every form of religious belief of mankind. And, therefore, in finding in Catholicity truths and rites which were held and observed, yet in a corrupted state, among the Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Chinese, and other nations of the earth, we have in this fact another evidence which confirms her divine origin and authority.

“There is no brighter token,” says a Protestant Divine, “that the Gospel comes from the great Builder of the world, than that it takes up in the scope of its own design, and makes a part of its own honor, whatever goodness has come to light in the world outside of its conscious kingdom. The moment this all-comprehending and Catholic law of life was revealed on earth in Jesus, all pre-existing morality seemed at once, by a natural necessity, to become an element in its strength. All foreign loveliness merged itself in that transcendent beauty. Name whatsoever virtue or aspiration you might, it had a niche provided for it in this Christian pantheon of the new worship. By this wonderful assimilative energy Christianity instantly appropriated to itself all the lawful forces

of nature. It enthroned itself as the sovereign of the world's experience, claiming the universal empire of divine right." *

The author of the above passage could not have better described the Catholic Church, and doubtless it was its history he had in mind while writing it, but the word "Gospel" was inserted to meet the prejudices of his hearers.

To give a practical illustration of the principles developed in this chapter and the preceding one, in contrast with those put forth by Protestantism, let us suppose a case.

Imagine that a young man, our "Earnest Seeker" for instance, should go to a Protestant preacher to find out what Christianity teaches. The preacher, consistent with his creed, brings forward the fundamental points of Protestantism, the total depravity of Human Nature, and justification by faith alone. This he does in order to make, as he thinks, the necessity of religion and of a Saviour the more deeply felt. He develops his ideas, and grows eloquent in his description of man's corrupt nature. All his thoughts are evil, all his feelings are evil, all his actions filthy. The good he does partakes of the nature of evil. His case has been made out, and he listens to what

* Huntington's Sermons for the People. 1856.

his young friend will say before pressing the conclusion.

But he replies, "Reverend Sir, whether this be Christianity or not, it is not my place to judge. It however seems to me that man's nature is not altogether bereft of traces of goodness, and evidences of his great Author. Reason has gleams of truth, and its aspirations leave him no rest till they are followed out and realized. At times noble and generous sentiments swell his bosom. He hates injustice, tyranny, oppression. Often he does wrong, it is true, but his conscience does not fail to admonish and make him feel wretched for it. Man is by no means an angel ; yet, Rev. Sir, it does not appear to me that he is totally depraved, evil, corrupt—a very devil."

"My young friend," says the preacher, "you are altogether astray. The Sacred Volume teaches no such views as you put forth concerning man. Too plainly it teaches the depravity of the human heart. You must not listen to the voice of a subtle self-love and pride. Believe God's holy word, or there is no escape from the punishment of eternal death."

"Yet, Reverend Sir, you surely cannot demand of me to believe what contradicts my Reason and shocks the dictates of my conscience? This

cannot be Religion ! Can it be an acceptable homage to the Author of my being to trample under foot his noblest gifts, Reason and Conscience ? No, sir ! ——”

“ But stop ! ” replies the preacher, in an excited tone, “ you must use no such language in my presence. How dare you set yourself up as the judge of God’s ways, and his Revelation ! Your language is that of unregenerated natures, the man of sin. This you must stifle, and listen to God’s word only. You must submit your Reason and Conscience to the Bible, and accept on faith alone, what it teaches, or your portion will be hell.”

“ Let me preserve,” replies the “ Earnest Seeker,” with the feelings of an outraged nature, “ let me preserve, Reverend Sir, my Reason and my Conscience, for these I know are God-given, and you are welcome to your Christianity. As for the future, Reverend Sir, I would rather take my chance with a sound Reason and a good Conscience, and risk your threatened hell, than accept your Christianity with the prospect of your heaven ! ”

This is no over-drawn picture, nor one from fancy ; it is an unvarnished statement of fact ; and not a few young men who have sought to

satisfy the cravings of their religious nature by Protestantism, could tell, in the main, the same as an event of personal experience.

It would be needless to relate, after what has been said, how differently the Catholic Priest would meet such a person. For the Catholic Religion, having the highest appreciation of Human Nature, recognizes and listens with reverence to its genuine voice, welcomes and confirms the good it finds, rectifies and cultivates what is astray, and re-establishes man in his true relations with the universe, and with God.

XXVIII.

Justification.

“Do not doubt
But to receive the grace, which Heaven vouchsafes,
Is meritorious, even as the soul
With prompt affection welcometh the guest.”

DANTE.

BEFORE entering on our present task, we cannot refrain from remarking that it is one which is beset with not a few difficulties. It will, however, become much easier if the indulgent reader will endeavor to recall what was said on Justification and Protestantism in the twentieth chapter.

There, according to the great lights of the Reformation and the formulas of the Protestant sects, we learned that “man is justified by faith alone, by which the righteousness of Christ is im-

puted to him, yet he still remains in sin, and is as black and as ugly as the devil himself almost."

Bearing this in mind, and what has been said in the foregoing chapters on Catholicity : that the Catholic Religion does not set aside or conflict with Reason, but enlightens, ennobles, perfects it ; and that grace, far from taking from man Free-Will, supposes its coöperation, and gives to it a superior strength by which it is elevated to a new mode of action ; with these things present to our memories, we shall be able to set aside many difficulties, and make our subject easily and better understood.

To begin with the beginning :—What is the meaning of the word "justification" in the Catholic sense of the term ?

"Justification," as described by the Council of Trent, and this is the only one of the Councils which has treated this point, consists in "the transferring of man from that state wherein he was born a child of the first Adam, to the state of grace, and of the adoption of the sons of God, through the second Adam, Jesus Christ our Saviour." *

Man, by the disobedience of Adam, lost the gift of sanctifying grace which entitled him to the

* Sess. v. c. iv.

beatific vision of God ; through Christ, this sin of disobedience is forgiven, the lost grace is restored to man, and he becomes once more the child of God and heir of heaven.

But how is this change brought about ? Has man nothing more to do in the matter than a clog or a stone ? Is this work of justification something altogether independent of man's coöperation, as Protestantism teaches ?

“ The Synod further declares that, in adults, the beginning of the said justification is to be derived from the preëminent grace of God through Jesus Christ . . . that so they, who by sins were alienated from God, may be disposed, through His quickening and assisting grace, to convert themselves to their own justification, by freely assenting to and coöperating with that said grace in such sort that, while God moveth the heart of man by the illumination of the Holy Ghost, neither is man himself utterly without doing any thing while he receives that inspiration, forasmuch as he is able to reject it ; yet is he not able, by his own free will, without the grace of God, to move himself unto Justice in his sight.” *

This makes justification a mutual work between God and man. According to the Catholic faith,

* c. v.

God gives to all men alienated by sin from him His quickening and assisting grace "to convert themselves to their own justification;" and if man is not justified, it is because he does not "assent and coöperate with this grace," but "rejects it." Thus, by the Catholic doctrine of justification, the goodness of God is maintained, for he gives the grace to convert to all. The justice of God is maintained, since, if man is not justified, it is because he rejects the grace to convert. The necessity of grace is maintained, for man is not able by his own Free-Will to move himself into justice in the sight of God. The dignity of man is maintained, for the work of justification can only take place by the free assent and coöperation of his will. Justification, then, according to the teachings of the Catholic religion, is the result of quickening and assisting grace and the assent and coöperation of Free-Will; and this doctrine beautifully reconciles the honor of God and the dignity of man in the work of Salvation.

As this work of man's justification is one that concerns his interest here and hereafter most intimately—one of eternal felicity, let us follow up closely the process by which it is fully accomplished.

"Now they (adults) are disposed unto said justice, when, excited and assisted by divine grace,

conceiving faith by hearing, they are freely moved towards God, believing those things to be true which God has revealed and promised,—and this especially, that God justifies the impious by His grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ ; and when understanding themselves to be sinners, they, by turning themselves from the fear of divine justice whereby they are profitably agitated, to consider the mercy of God, are raised into hope, confiding that God will be propitious to them for Christ's sake ; and they begin to love Him as the fountain of all justice, and are therefore moved against sins by a certain hatred and detestation, to wit, by that penance which must be performed before baptism ; lastly, when they purpose to receive baptism, to begin a new life, and to keep the commandments of God." *

In this manner God treats man as a rational and free-agent in the work of restoring him to that grace and felicity which was lost by Adam's disobedience. On the one hand, we have the wonderful and secret workings of God's Spirit, and on the other, the activity of man's intelligence and the free assent and coöperation of his will. How different from that irrational theology which holds up to our view a God of a stern and irresistible

* c. vii.

necessity, and pictures man as the entirely passive and helpless slave of his despotic power !

Suppose these dispositions and preparations of mind and heart have preceded, and the person purposes to receive Baptism, what has that to do with justification ? Let the Council speak :—

“ If any one denies, that, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is conferred in baptism, the guilt of original sin is remitted ; or even asserts that the whole of that which has the true and proper nature of sin is not taken away, but says that it is only cancelled, or not imputed ; let him be anathema. For, in those who are born again, there is nothing that God hates ; because, there is no condemnation to those who are truly buried together with Christ by baptism into death ; who walk not according to the flesh, but, putting off the old man, and putting on the new, who is created according to God, are made innocent, immaculate, pure, harmless, and beloved of God, heirs indeed of God, but joint heirs with Christ ; so that there is nothing whatever to retard their entrance into heaven. But this holy Synod confesses and is sensible, that in the baptized there remains concupiscence, or an incentive ; which, whereas it is left for our exercise, cannot injure those who consent not, but resist manfully

by the grace of Jesus Christ ; yea, he who shall have striven lawfully, shall be crowned." *

Baptism, therefore, is the means whereby the grace of justification is communicated to the soul. And this justification is not something "foreign," "extrinsic," "imputed," or "reputed" to the soul, but a reality, inherent, essential, by which we are made innocent, immaculate, pure, harmless, and beloved of God ! The work of Christianity in this way, is not made out a thing of mere appearance and sham, but a real and sincere restoration of the soul. Let, however, the Council explain further this matter ; for the truth, consistency, and beauty of its teachings, command our assent and excite our admiration.

"Justification, which is not the remission of sins merely, but also the sanctification and renewal of the inward man, through the voluntary reception of the grace and of the gifts, whereby man of unjust becomes just, and of an enemy a friend, that so he may be an heir according to hope of life everlasting. . . . The instrumental cause is the sacrament of baptism, which is the sacrament of faith, without which faith no man was ever justified ; lastly, the formal cause is the justice of God, not that whereby He Himself is just, but that

* Sess. v.

whereby He maketh us just, that, to wit, with which we, being endowed by Him, are renewed in the spirit of our mind, and we are not only reputed, but are truly called, and are, just ; receiving justice within us, each one according to his own measure, which the Holy Ghost distributes to every one as He wills, and according to each one's proper disposition and coöperation. For, although no one can be just, but he to whom the merits of the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ are communicated, yet is this done in the said justification of the impious, when, by the merit of that same most holy Passion, the charity of God is poured forth, by the Holy Spirit, in the hearts of those who are justified, and is inherent therein ; whence man, through Jesus Christ, in whom he is ingrafted, receives, in the said justification, together with the remission of sins, all these gifts infused at once, faith, hope, and charity . . . Wherefore, when receiving true and Christian justice, they are bidden, immediately on being born again, to preserve it pure and spotless, as the first robe given them through Jesus Christ in lieu of that which Adam, by his disobedience, lost for himself and for us, that so they may bear it before the judgment-seat of our Lord Jesus Christ, and may have life everlasting." *

* Sess. vi.

Thus justification, in the Catholic meaning of the word, is the renewal of the inward man through the voluntary reception of the gifts and graces of God. Being endowed by God, we are renewed in the spirit of our mind, and we are not only reputed, but are truly called, and are, just, receiving justice within us. The merits of Christ, and the charity of God, is poured forth by the Holy Spirit in the heart, and is inherent therein.

The soul once more adorned with gifts and graces of God, restored to its ancient beauty, and elevated to the plane of the grandeur of its sublime destiny, we are not surprised at the saying of a saint, that, could we behold the beauty of a soul in the grace of God, we would die for joy. Or of another, who, on seeing a soul in grace, said that she would willingly die to prevent it from losing so great a beauty.

What a contrast with that religion which teaches that the "justification of the sinner is a reputed one;" "they are looked upon as just, although, by virtue of corrupt nature, they are truly sinners, and remain so even unto death;" "if you regarded a Christian as he is in himself, you would simply see, however holy he may be, no purity at all in him, but you would see him as black and ugly as almost the devil himself." Yet such is

the absurd, ridiculous, horrid doctrine of justification taught by Orthodox, Evangelical Protestantism ! The Reformers were consistent in making it a prerequisite to “strangle Reason” in order to be a Protestant Christian.

Connected with this subject is the doctrine of the merit of good works. We have seen that those who set themselves up as teachers of a purified Gospel, held that the virtues of the pagans were vices ; and that even the works of a justified man, as the actions of a corrupt being, were in themselves deadly sins ; and that if the doctrine of justification by faith alone is lost, it would be all over with them.

The Catholic religion teaching that man is in possession of Reason and Free-Will ; that justification is a real and inherent one ; it cannot but hold to the ability to do good works, and the necessity of them both before and after justification.

Hence the Council of Trent condemns those who say :—

“That all works done before Justification, in whatsoever way they be done, are truly sins, or merit the hatred of God.” *

And also it condemns those who say :—

* Sess. vi.

“ That by faith alone the impious is justified ; in such wise as to mean, that nothing else is required to coöperate in order to the obtaining the grace of Justification, and that it is not in any way necessary, that he be prepared and disposed by the movement of his own will.” *

And after Justification, the Council declares that :—

“ Before men who have been justified . . . are to be set the words of the Apostle : ‘ Abound in every good work, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord ; ’ ‘ for God is not unjust, that he should forget your work, and the love which you have shown in his name ; ’ and ‘ do not lose your confidence, which hath a great reward.’ † And for this cause, life eternal is to be proposed to those working well unto the end, and hoping in God, both as a grace mercifully promised to the sons of God through Jesus Christ, and as a reward which is according to the promise of God Himself, to be faithfully rendered to their good works and merits.” ‡ . . . And in the canon on this subject the same Council declares that

“ If any one saith that the good works of one that is justified are in such manner the gifts of God, as that they are not also the good merits of

* Sess. vi. † 1 Cor. xv. 58. Hebr. vi. 10. Ib. x. 35. ‡ Sess. vi.

him that is justified ; or, that the said justified, by the good works which he performs through the grace of God and the merits of Jesus Christ, whose living member he is, does not truly merit increase of grace, eternal life, and the attainment of that eternal life,—if so be, however, that he depart in grace—and also an increase of glory ; let him be anathema.” *

The doctrine of justification thus presented, answers completely to man's intellectual and moral nature. In the first place the intelligence is enlightened to see the relations in which man in his present condition stands to his Creator ; the will is excited to believe God's promises ; and both Reason and will coöperate with God's grace in the soul's restoration. And when so restored, God offers to it heaven, and an increase of glory, on condition of its fidelity and coöperation by good works.

Thus Catholicity seizes hold of our whole nature, puts all our faculties in action, and directs all our energies to the attainment of our divinely-appointed end. Behold a Religion which is consistent with purity, with justice, and with the mercy of God !

* Sess. ii.

XXIX.

Individuality.

“And were the world below content to mark,
And work on the foundation nature lays,
It would not lack supply of excellence.”

DANTE.

GRAVE authors inform us, and this piece of information is reiterated again and again by the press, so that through one or the other channel we have it incessantly dinned in our ears, that “the Romish religion oppresses and destroys the individuality of its members. The individual is made of no account in its system; no room is left for the free play of personal action. Romanism governs with a tyrant’s rod and sway.”

To hear this language from the lips of men who are the dupes of that wretched system of “religion which comprises creatures without liberty, doctrines

without common sense, faith without Reason, and a God without pity," excites us indeed, but only to smile. Surely, men who can make such calumnious charges against the Catholic religion, in an enlightened community, are beyond the reach of argument or the force of facts.

Gentle reader, pass these men by as you would a group of disordered intellects, and let them gnarl on in token of the galling chains from which they suffer, and be not weary to pause here awhile and consider how beautifully Catholicity brings out man's individuality, and gives a free and various field for the display of his manifold faculties.

Every faculty of the soul, rightly exercised, leads to truth ; every instinct of our nature has an eternal destiny attached to it. Catholicity finds her support in these, and employs them in all her developments. It is one of her fundamental principles to welcome, sanction, and encourage individual exertion. Witness her countless variety of religious orders, for men and women, congregations, confraternities, sodalities, adapted to the peculiar bent, tastes, and qualities of all classes of individuals.

"Religion, justly viewed," says Dr. Channing, and in so speaking he describes the Catholic religion beautifully, "surpasses all other principles,

in giving free and manifold action to the mind. It recognizes in every faculty and sentiment the workmanship of God, and assigns a sphere of agency to each. It takes our whole nature under its guardianship, and with a parental love, ministers to the inferior as well as to the higher gratifications. False religion mutilates the soul, sees evil in our innocent sensibilities, and rules with a tyrant's frown and rod. True religion is a mild and lawful sovereign, governing to protect, to give strength, to unfold all our inward resources." *

As the truth is more plainly seen, when contrasted with error, let us compare the Protestant religion with the Catholic on this most interesting point.

Every observer has been not seldom surprised at the variety of mental and moral tastes and differences of character among men ; and even among those who devote themselves to religion. What a difference among even the patriarchs and prophets of old, and equally so among the apostles of Christianity ! In what light does the Protestant religion regard these peculiarities and differences of vocation among men ?

Suppose there be one whose eyes are turned towards eternity, and listening to the words of the

* Vol. ii. p. 211.

Divine Master, "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" would renounce all, and give himself up entirely to his eternal interests, what encouragement would he find in Protestantism? Take another who intently regards his Master's sufferings, fastings, self-denial, and poverty, and hears as if from His own lips the words, "Take up the cross and follow me," what sympathy would such a one find in reformed Christianity? Another recognizes God in the poor, the sick, the down-trodden, the wretched; and the words of the Lord touch her heart, "As often as you do this to the least of these you do it unto me;" and she would devote her whole life and all her energies to their service for love of Jesus: what help and sanction would she find in the religion of the Reformation? Another, like St. John the Baptist, would retire into the desert or live among the rocks, the wild flowers, the old oaks or majestic palms, and among the beauties of nature lift up his soul to gaze on the beauty of its Author; what consideration would Protestant Christianity bestow upon such a one? Imagine another taken with love for the divine virtue of virginity, would follow her Lord and his beloved disciple in their saintly steps, and vows her virgin soul to God; how would Protestantism look upon that? But we must stop,

for there is no end to the wonderful variety of vocations, and God's views in regard to men, and ask our question : Would Protestantism, in her development, employ these devoted men and women, sanction their divine call, and encourage them to fidelity ? Or would it look down upon them in derision, and with a contemptuous smile treat them as crack-brained enthusiasts ?

Every man who has ever known what Protestantism is, knows full well that it chills the generous impulses of the soul, and has no conception of an heroic self-sacrificing devotion to the interests of God and the welfare of man.

“These views are every day driving distinguished, and gifted, and enthusiastic women into the pale of that church, which stretches out its arms, and says : ‘Come unto me, ye who are troubled, ye who are idle, and I will give you rest and work, and with these sympathy and reverence, the religious sanction, direction, and control !’ Can we find nothing of all this for our women ? Why should they thus go out from us ? I, for my part, do not understand it.” *

Now let us cast a glance on the other side, and, lest we may be accused of exaggeration, another pen, and a Protestant one, shall draw the contrast :—

* Mrs. Jameson's Sisters of Charity.

“Far different is the policy of Rome. The ignorant enthusiast whom the Anglican Church makes an enemy, and, whatever the learned and polite may think, a most dangerous enemy, the Catholic Church makes a champion. She bids him nurse his beard, covers him with a gown and hood of coarse dark stuff, ties a rope around his waist, and sends him forth to teach in her name.

“He costs her nothing, He takes not a ducat from the revenues of her beneficed clergy. He lives by the alms of those who respect his spiritual character, and are grateful for his instructions. He preaches not exactly in the style of Massillon, but in a way which moves the passions of uneducated hearers ; and all his influence is employed to strengthen the church of which he is a minister. To that church he becomes as strongly attached as any of the cardinals whose scarlet carriages and liveries crowd the entrance of the palace on the Quirinal. In this way the Church of Rome unites in herself all the strength of an establishment and all the strength of dissent. With the utmost pomp of a dominant hierarchy above, she has all the energy of the voluntary system below. Even for female agency there is a place in her system. To devout women she assigns spiritual functions, dignities, and magistracies. In our country, if a

noble lady is moved by more than ordinary zeal for the propagation of religion, the chance is, that though she may disapprove of no one doctrine or ceremony of the Established Church, she will end by giving her name to a new schism. If a pious and benevolent woman enters the cells of a prison to pray with the most unhappy and degraded of her own sex, she does so without any authority from the church. No line of action is traced out for her ; and it is well if the ordinary does not complain of her intrusion, and if the Bishop does not shake his head at such irregular benevolence. At Rome the Countess of Huntington would have a place in the calendar, as St. Selma, and Mrs. Fry would be the foundress and first Superior of the Blessed Order of Sisters of the jails.

“ Place Ignatius Loyola at Oxford ; he is certain to become the head of a formidable secession. Place John Wesley at Rome ; he is certain to be the first general of a new society devoted to the interests and honor of the church. Place St. Theresa in London ; her restless enthusiasm ferments into madness, not untinctured with craft. She becomes the prophetess and mother of the faithful, holds disputations with the devil, issues sealed pardons to her adorers, and lies-in of the Shiloh. Place Joanna Southcote at Rome. She

founds an order of barefooted Carmelites, every one of whom is ready to suffer martyrdom for the church—a solemn service is consecrated to her memory, and her statue, placed over the holy water, strikes the eye of every stranger who enters St. Peter's." *

If this be so, and where is there one to deny or gainsay its truth? then the Catholic religion, so far from crushing man's individuality and independence, is wonderfully calculated and adapted to call forth, sustain, and perfect the tastes, propensities, and peculiarities of human nature. And let no one venture to say that these characteristics which are every where found among men, are to be repressed rather than encouraged. This is to despise human nature. This is to mar the work of God. For are not these peculiarities inborn? Are they not implanted in us by the hand of our Creator? Are they not what go to constitute our very individuality? That our author above has given a correct view of the Catholic Church is confirmed by a distinguished writer of our own country:—

"The Romish religion," so says the celebrated Dr. Channing, "calls itself one; but it has a singular variety of forms and aspects. For the lover of forms and outward religion it has a gor-

* Macaulay.

geous ritual. To the mere man of the world it shows a Pope on the throne, Bishops in palaces, and all the splendor of earthly dominion. At the same time for the self-denying ascetic, mystical and fanatical, it has all forms of monastic life. To him who would scourge himself into godliness, it offers a whip. To him who would starve himself into spirituality it provides the mendicant convents of St. Francis. For the anchorite it prepares the death-bed-like silence of La Trappe. To the passionate young woman it presents the raptures of St. Theresa, and the marriage of St. Catherine with her Saviour. For the restless pilgrim whose piety needs a greater variety than the cell of the monk, it offers shrines, tombs, relics, and holy places in Christian lands, and above all the holy sepulchre near Calvary. To the generous, sympathizing enthusiast, it opens some fraternity or sisterhood of charity. To him who inclines to take heaven by violence, it gives as much penance as he can ask ; and to the mass of men, who wish to reconcile the two worlds, it promises purgatory, so far softened down by the masses of the priest and the prayers of the faithful, that its fires can be anticipated without overwhelming dread. This composition of forces in the Romish Church, seems to me a wonderful movement of skill. When in

Rome, the traveller sees by the side of the purple-lackeyed cardinal, the begging friar ; when under the arches of St. Peter, he sees a coarsely dressed monk holding forth to a ragged crowd, or when beneath a Franciscan church, adorned with the most precious works of art, he meets a charnel-house where the bones of the dead brethren are built into walls, between which the living walk to read their mortality, he is amazed, if he gives himself time for reflection, at the infinite variety of machinery which Catholicism has brought to bear upon the human mind, at the sagacity with which it has adapted itself to the various tastes and propensities of human nature.” *

Acknowledgments of this kind, from such sources, form an all-sufficient refutation of the charge that Catholicity restrains man's personal activity, cramps his genius, and crushes out all his individuality and feeling of personal independence. At the same time we must acknowledge, that the doctor passes on Catholics a compliment for “sagacity” for which, if it be meant, they ought to be under the greatest obligations. To attribute this “adaptation of itself to the various tastes and propensities of human nature” to the sagacity of Catholics, is not usual for Protestants. In the

* Vol II. pp. 273-4-5.

name of our common manhood and intelligence, is all "skill and sagacity in religion" confined to these Catholics? One can hardly believe that the doctor intended so great, so extravagant a compliment as his words import. For never before Catholicity, never alongside of Catholicity, was there such an "infinite variety of machinery brought to bear upon the human mind." It is truly "amazing." Our bosoms swell with a just pride at the very thought of it. Hereafter let the world cease to wag its slanderous tongue by charging the Catholic Church with crushing man's individuality, benumbing his activity, and making him a slave. We accept the compliment; but our readers must not think us over-suspicious when we tell them that it is our honest opinion, the distinguished writer did not really and sincerely mean it. It must be regarded as an expedient to escape the humiliating acknowledgment of truth—the truth that the Catholic Church could not have shown such an adaptation to the variety of tastes and propensities of human nature, unless guided by a higher intelligence, and instinct with a sagacity more than human.

That it is not human sagacity which brings these things about, is plain from the strenuous efforts and frequent experiments which have been

made to copy these adaptations among Protestants, and the fact that they have been met with nothing but disappointment and most signal failure. For with all its attempts it has as yet failed to produce even one Sister of Charity. How important and necessary this variety of adaptations is to the carrying on of God's work, and how eager Protestants would be to have it among themselves, were it possible, is evinced most forcibly in a recent charge of a Protestant bishop to his clergy. "We must," he says, "look upon the church not merely as a sacred monument, but also as a working organism ; as the great agent placed in the world to redeem the world. We must catch the spirit of enterprise which now vitalizes society, and aim at doing great things ; we must have enough of elasticity to adapt ourselves to all the various phases of social life, and be able sometimes to bend without breaking. The church should be as much at home in the wilds of Nebraska, and speak as directly to the living wants of those remote regions, as she does to the refined congregations of the metropolis. We must find a place for men of all varieties of temperament, and give to each just that work to do for which he is the best fitted. We must face the real evils of society, and so exhibit the church that the poor will

look to her as their helper, the outcast look to her as their comforter. The establishment of our free churches, hospitals, mutual relief societies, and the like, is one of the most hopeful indications of the church. This movement will do more to commend her to public favor than all the arguments that ever were written." * Suppose, now, that all this Protestant Episcopalian bishop says "we must do" were done, what would be accomplished? Why, a miniature, and that imperfect, of what the Catholic Church has always done, and always will do until the end of time. But those who are read in the history of Protestantism and its efforts, know full well that it possesses a demoniac power to pull down, but is utterly helpless and inefficient to build up.

"The truth seems to me to amount to this," says a Protestant writer, "that the Roman Catholic Church has had the good sense to turn to account, and assimilate to itself, and inform with its own peculiar doctrines, a deep-seated principle in our Human Nature,—a law of life, which we Protestants have had the folly to repudiate." †

That Catholicity gives full scope and freedom to individual action, is seen on a broader scale in the characteristics of Catholic nations. For though

* Dr. Clarke, Bishop of R. I.

† Mrs. Jameson's Sisters of Charity.

she makes all men Catholic, yet at the same time they lose nothing of their individual or national virtues. Italy, Spain, Germany, France, Ireland, Belgium, are all Catholic nations, yet how widely different in their personal and national character ! Can one imagine a wider difference than that which exists between the passionate, lively, and choleric Italian and the slow, grave and philosophic German ? What a difference between the sombre, stately, inflexible Spaniard, and the gay, affable, plastic Frenchman ! Compare the warm-hearted, cheerful, all-enthusiastic Irishman with the quiet, steady, sedate Belgian. Yet these are nations that have been under Catholic influences from the cradle of their civilization. How strikingly have they not preserved all their national features, national virtues, national existence ! Indeed the Catholic Religion is the only religion which preserves the individuality of persons as well as the characters of nations. Alas ! there was a time when England had a national character, and that was when she was under the healthful influences of Catholicity ;—England then was merry, renowned for her piety and religious institutions. What is England renowned for now ? Sadness, impiety, ginshops, workhouses, and factories.

What a change ! A nation that under Catholic influences was called *par excellence* merry, now, under antagonistic influences, so far from being merry, that hypochondria is treated of by their own medical writers under the title of “the English malady.” A nation which once was looked upon as a beautiful garden, studded as it was with its magnificent churches and glorious abbeys, now, with all its wealth, and all the exertions of late years in the way of church-building, does not possess, and it is an English Protestant writer who declares it, “the number or near it of churches which existed at the time of the Reformation.” Well may we, in tones of pity and sympathy, join the same writer in singing :—

Oh, the good old times of England : ere in her evil day
From their holy faith and her ancient rites her people fell
 away,
When her gentlemen had hands to give, and her yeomen
 hearts to feel,
And they raised full many a bead-house, but never a bastile ;
And the poor they honored, for they knew that He who for
 us bled,
Had seldom when he came on earth whereon to lay his head.

But times and things are altered now, and Englishmen begin
To class the beggar with the knave, and poverty with sin.

We shut them up from tree and flower, and from the blessed
sun,
We tear in twain the hearts that God in wedlock had made
one.
No gentle Nun with transport sweet, no Friar standeth nigh
With ghostly strength and holy love to close the poor man's
eye,
But the corpse is thrown into its ground, when the prayers
are hurried o'er,
To rest in peace a little while, and then make room for more.*

Thus on the one hand, we have Protestantism denying to man all that goes to make him a man, repudiating his nature, mutilating his faculties, and destroying all elevated personal and national character ; while, on the other hand, we find Catholicity calling forth all man's slumbering powers, sustaining their action, and giving a full liberty, and her benediction to his individual exertions ; offering to every one a place for his activity in accordance with his tastes and genius, and teaching him that he serves God by sanctifying his nature.

* Hierolog. by Rev. J. M. Neale.

XXX.

Unibersality.

“Of all seeds
This holy plaln is filled, and in itself bears fruit
That ne'er was plucked on other soil.”

DANTE.

IT would seem that nothing further remains to be said on the Catholicity of the Church, after having exhibited its exquisite adaptation to the inborn faculties, tastes, characteristics, and genius as well of individuals as of nations.

But man has aspirations and sympathies which are boundless in their reach, and cannot be confined to himself, to a family, or even to a nation. Humanity is not a word without meaning, but one which may be so pronounced as to inspire men with a wonderful enthusiasm, and stir them up to noblest enterprises. Man is not fully conscious of the greatness of his manhood, until he is so engaged

in purposes which embrace the welfare of the whole human race, as to sink in these all lower instincts. The highest aim of man is to live for God, and to labor for the universal welfare of mankind. Nothing less than this can satisfy man's noblest instincts and fill his large heart. His mind demands to know universal truth ; his heart craves universal love ; his will demands to act for universal ends.

Such is man, and what has Protestantism done to answer to these all-expansive and most ennobling instincts ? The realm of universal truth it has broken to fragments, created wrangling sects, and made a desert in the mind. For universal sympathy it has caused countless dissensions, endless disputes, and perfect isolation, making a void in the heart. For the universal aims of men, it has confined man's aim to himself, and to the development of those instincts which he has in common with the animal, making the will the slave to self-gratification. This is what the glorious Reformation of the sixteenth century has done for humanity. And enlightened men, who have no prejudice to serve, no selfish interest to sway their judgments, who have the cause of truth at heart, see it, proclaim it, and seek for a religion adequate to their wants.

It is the discovery of this fact that has led so many gifted and learned men from every department of science and of art, to return to the bosom of that Church which, in spite of the utmost efforts of her enemies, alone bears, as she has from early ages borne, the title of CATHOLIC.

Were those men of recognized merit, out of every department of science and of art, who, even in our own day, have become converts to the Catholic faith, classified,—we should be forced to recognize in their conversion a voluntary and complete homage of the highest forms of truth to the Catholicity of the Church. Only within the Catholic Church are found the theologian and the philosopher, the statesman, the artist, and the man of science, combined in their efforts to demonstrate the same great truths, and express the same divine beauty.

All truths of science find in her a welcome ; every work of art has in her temples its own appropriate niche. It would take us too long to give a complete demonstration of this statement ; we must therefore confine ourselves to art, and art in its various forms of expression. The Catholic Church has always been true to art, and alone consecrates the works of genius to the noblest of purposes, the divine service of God. What more

ennobling thought can inspire the true artist than that the fruits of his labor are consecrated by Religion, and employed in her worship to elevate less gifted souls to the contemplation of that sublime ideal which he has endeavored to embody in sensible forms ? Can the artist have a higher aim than to raise up the common mind to gaze upon that divine beauty which feeds his soul, and more than rewards him for his toil and sacrifices ? Does not this realize his holiest aspirations and largest sympathies ?

Perish the creed that would shut out from its temples the works of God's noblest gifts to man ; and an eternal warfare on the worship that would deprive men of those heaven-inspired aids by which the mind is enabled to gaze on the original of all that is true, good, and beautiful.

Catholicity does not limit itself to the appropriation of the noble productions of genius in her temples ; it does more ; it inspires genius with the highest and most noble conceptions. Art is the spontaneous expression of all the great original systems of religion adopted by the human race. It is religion that has given birth to art in Egypt, Greece, ancient and modern Rome, Italy, Germany, and France. The temples, the statues, the paintings and great poems of both the ancient and the

modern world, were consecrated to the honor of the religion which inspired the genius of the artists. It is to the sublime dogmas and the unrivalled heroes of Christianity, that the modern genius of art is indebted for its highest conceptions and embodiment of beauty. The more religious a people is, the more naturally the arts flourish among them. For art becomes a kind of necessity to a religious people, since it alone can satisfy the need which men feel, of clothing their highest inspirations, of which Religion is the fountain source, with the highest form of sensible expression. Hence, Protestantism can give birth to no art ; because it is not a genuine religion ; it lacks originality ; it is precisely what its name imports, a negation.

To copy either heathen or Catholic works is the best it can accomplish, and when its Wrens, Wests, Allstons, Thorwaldsens, Powers, Weirs, would have their genius enkindled, they are compelled to go to Rome. But as Catholicity diffuses itself art springs into life and flourishes naturally. For the Church is not only the patron, but the mother of the arts. It is under her divine influence that all the nobler powers of the soul are stimulated into activity, and sustained. They therefore who rise to a more universal and higher

perceptivity of the True, Good, and Beautiful, such as a Leibnitz, a Grotius, a Burke, a Sir Humphry Davy, a Novalis, are almost unconsciously disposed to be Catholic. This, too, is the secret of the conversion to Catholicity of so many lovers of the fine arts, and of men of refined and cultivated tastes. For all the higher and purer affinities of the soul are attracted to the Catholic Church as to their native and parent source.

Christianity, to be a universal religion, and find a permanent home in man's bosom, must not only answer his aspirations for universal truth and captivate his sense of beauty ; it must also satisfy the vast craving of his heart for universal communion. Expressing this instinct, an eloquent author says :—

“Moral greatness did not die out with the apostles. Their lives were reported for this, among other ends, that their virtues might be propagated to future times, and that men might spring up as worthy a place among the canonized as themselves. What I wish is, that we should learn to regard ourselves as members of a vast spiritual community, as joint heirs and fellow-worshippers with the goodly company of Christian heroes who have gone before us, instead of immuring ourselves in particular churches. Our nature

delights in this consciousness of vast connections. This tendency manifests itself in the patriotic sentiment, and in the passionate clinging of men to great religious denominations. Its true and noblest gratification is found in the deep feeling of a vital, everlasting connection with the universal Church, with the innumerable multitude of the holy on earth and in heaven." *

But does the Catholic religion so represent Christianity, as to afford that "true and noblest gratification of the consciousness of vast connections wherein our nature delights?" Who shall give the answer so as to bring the truth home to the convictions of our readers? Shall we speak, and tell how the noblest sensibilities of our nature, which hitherto had laid in a deathlike slumber, under its quickening influences, are awoke into energetic life and action? Shall we reveal how it enlarges the heart by its vast connections, makes man feel for man as his brother, and gives birth to a communion, while here, which was thought to be the privilege of heaven alone? Shall we make known how it stimulates and sanctions the noble desire to live, to work, to sacrifice oneself, and to die, if needs be, for love of our fellow-men? But no; we leave our testimony to be recorded in such

* Dr. Channing, vol. v.

a way that men cannot refuse to recognize its sincerity and truth—in deeds. Let the same author answer whether the Catholic Church meets the sentiments which he has expressed.

“The word Catholic,” he says, “means universal. Would to God that the Church, which has usurped the name, had understood the reality ! Still Romanism has done something to give its members the idea of the connection with that vast spiritual community, or Church, which has existed in all times and spread over all lands. It regards the memory of great and holy men who in all ages have toiled and suffered for Religion, asserts the honor of the heroes of faith, enshrines them in heaven as beatified saints, converts their legends into popular literature, appoints days to the celebration of their virtues, and reveals them as almost living to the age by the pictures in which genius has immortalized their deeds . . . She has given to her members the feelings of intimate relation to the highest and noblest men in all preceding ages. An interesting and often a sanctifying tie connects the present Roman Catholic with martyrs, confessors, and a host of men whose eminent piety and genius and learning have won for them an immortal fame. It is no mean service thus to enlarge men’s ideas and affections, to teach them

their connection with the grandest spirits of all times." *

A capital acknowledgment that the Catholic Church has answered to man's noblest sympathies, bating the fling at "usurpation," which, however, a Catholic mind will readily excuse, seeing that the author has told so much of truth.

Men's destinies are linked together, and are one. Man isolated from man withers, becomes decrepit, and dies. The Church, to be Catholic, must not only give to its members the idea of the connection with a "vast spiritual community," but practically labor to bring about an universal brotherhood among men upon earth. How has the Catholic Church acted her part in this regard ?

"During the rough contests of the feudal tyrannies," says Bancroft, "of the middle ages, Religion had opened in the Church an asylum for the people. There the serf and the beggar could kneel ; there the pilgrim and the laborer were shrived ; and the children of misfortune, not less than the prosperous, were welcomed to the house of prayer. The Church was consequently at once the guardian of equality, and the nurse of the arts ; and the souls of Giotto, and Perugino, and Raphael, moved by an infinite sympathy with the

* Dr. Channing, vol. v.

crowd, kindled with divine conceptions of beautiful forms." *

But this does not complete the moral harmonies of which the Catholic Church is the centre. Let another writer attempt to describe how she labored incessantly to make men feel that they were all of one kindred, and from barbarism brought forth civilized society—CHRISTENDOM.

"In the history of the European, from the time of the Emperor Constantine to the 18th century, the ecclesiastical element so greatly preponderates as to constitute its almost essential feature ; and, after all, it is impossible to do justice to the effects which ensued on the establishment of Christianity, and its adoption by the white man as his religion. The civil law exerted an exterior power in human relations ; this produced an interior and moral change. The idea of an ultimate accountability for personal deeds, of which the old Europeans had an indistinct perception, became intense and precise ; the sentiment of universal charity was exemplified not only in individual acts, the remembrance of which soon passes away, but in the more permanent institution of establishments for the relief of affliction, the spread of knowledge, the propagation of truth. Of the great ecclesi-

* *Miscellanies*, p. 418.

asties, many had risen from the humblest ranks of society, and these men, true to their democratic instincts, were often found to be the inflexible supporters of right against might. Eventually coming to be the depositaries of the knowledge that then existed, they opposed intellect to brute force, in many instances successfully ; and by the example of the organization of the Church, which was essentially republican, they showed how representative systems may be introduced into the state. Nor was it over communities and nations that the Church displayed her chief power. Never in the world before was there such a system. From her central seat at Rome, her all-seeing eye, like that of Providence itself, could equally take in a hemisphere at a glance, or examine the private life of any individual. Her boundless influence enveloped kings in their palaces, or relieved the beggar at the monastery gate. In all Europe there was not a man too obscure, too insignificant, or too desolate for her. Surrounded by her solemnities, every one received his name at her altar ; her bells chimed at his marriage, her knell tolled at his funeral, she extorted from him the secrets of his life at her confessionals, and punished his faults by her penances. In his hour of sickness and trouble her servants sought him out, teaching

him, by her exquisite litanies and prayers, to place his reliance on God, or strengthening him for the trials of life by the example of the holy and just. Her prayers had an efficacy to give repose to the soul of his dead. When even to his friends his lifeless body had become an offence, in the name of God she received it into her consecrated ground, and under her shadow he rested till the great reckoning day. From little better than a slave she raised his wife to be his equal, and forbidding him to have more than one, met her recompense for those noble deeds in a firm friend at every fireside. Discountenancing all impure love, she put round that fireside the children of one mother, and made that mother little less than sacred in their eyes. In ages of lawlessness and rapine, among people but a step above savages, she vindicated the inviolability of her precincts against the hand of power, and made her temples a refuge and sanctuary for the despairing and oppressed. Truly she was the shadow of a great rock in many a weary land !” *

Thus did the Catholic Church break down those barriers which separated man from man, and struggle in the midst of darkness to realize the sublime idea of a universal brotherhood of men upon earth.

* Draper's Physiology, p. 625.

The divine charm which she exercised over men's minds, is broken ; the bonds of universal sympathy with which she bound men's hearts, are snapt asunder, but she is one and unchangeable. She knows no past, no wrinkles form upon her heaven-inspired brow, no age tarnishes her celestial beauty ; for, though ancient, yet she is always new, because Divine.

The cry for Universal Communion ! for Progress ! for Universal Restoration ! for Humanity ! stirs men's hearts, thrills their blood through their veins, and nerves their arms to enterprises for the welfare of the human race. Experience demonstrates that individual exertions are too weak to accomplish universal ends. Men look around them in distress for an organization with power fitted to the realization of their lofty aspirations, noble hopes, and immense desires. The divine society of the Catholic Church, the only great and grand institution handed down from age to age unimpaired, the mother of modern civilization, the founder of Christendom, the genius which inspired the great crusades, looms up before their eyes in all the strength of Unity, in all the majesty of Catholicity, in all the beauty of Holiness, as the only hope Humanity has for the Future.

Lovers of your race, cheer up ! the enthusiasm

which enkindled the hearts of men, of women, and of even little children, to battle in armies against the enemies of Christian civilization ; the love that inspired men and women to live and die for God and Humanity, beats as strong and as lively now as then in the bosom of God's Church. Men of the Future ! the sky brightens, the day of hope will come ; and the human race, under her divine guidance, will march as one man to its Divine Destiny.

XXXI.

Church.

"A castle strongly built, and eminent,
Above Time's battle-plain, defaced and gory;
A palace where, in robes of kingly glory,
Our spirits rest."

DE VEE.

GOD, in his ordinary providence, does not present immediately to men's mind's the truths of Revelation. For this purpose he employs the usual channels of communicating truth to visible organs. In accordance with this principle, God took a material body with visible organs to make known his Religion to men. Now the Church stands in relation to men as the body of Christ did, a means of conveying to men the truths of Divine Revelation by visible organs. This is the reason why the Church is called in Holy Writ, "the Body of Christ."

It is not possible that the truths of Divine Revelation should be transmitted from generation to generation, through different nations, climes, and forms of political society, without any alterations or additions to the end of time, except through a visible organ, which is made by the power of God, independent of and above the sway and influence of human passions and interests.

A Revelation which is not so guarded and preserved, eventually will lose its divine character, and open the door to feelings of incertitude and doubt, and fail to give that security to our religious convictions which Reason demands.

A Church which professes to be charged with the office of teaching the truths of the Christian Revelation, and which is not provided with the Divine promise never to fall into error, or be subject to corruptions, is only fit to address upon their eternal interests, men who have never exercised their thinking faculties, or who are wholly indifferent about their future welfare.

Of all assumptions of power that were ever heard of, the most arrogant and awful is that which, without an unerring and divine sanction, makes the profession of teaching to mankind the way of eternal salvation. This is an unbearable imposition, and should be resisted by every man

who retains his manhood, and would not rashly expose his soul to eternal perdition.

Any reformation of the Christian Religion after it was established once for all, by its Divine Author, presupposes that Christianity was not a final and complete revelation, or that He lacked the power to establish it on an imperishable basis.

But the Author of Christianity, in founding his Church, promised that the gates of hell should not prevail against it, and that He would be with it until the end of ages ; this left no pretext consistent with a belief in his Divine character or his honesty, for a reformation or a protest against His Church.

Hence those men who have protested against the Church of Christ, from Arius to Luther, were actuated by the spirit of Anti-Christ. And in view of the fatal effects of the religious revolution of the Reformation, the Protestant Kirchoff says : "I would not know how to produce any solid argument against any one who should proclaim Luther the forerunner of the age of Anti-Christ."

The necessity of the Church, and of its divine character, is twofold. For Christianity is not only a complete system of divinely revealed truths, answering to the otherwise insoluble questions of

Reason, opening to its eye the glorious destiny of the soul, it is also the source of Divine Life. Hence Christ says, "I am the vine ; you the branches : he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit ; for without me ye can do nothing." * Christ being both the Light and the Life of men, the Church must both enlighten the mind and vitalize the heart.

But life is organic. There is no other life traceable. An organic visible body, exempt from all liability to decay or corruption, is therefore necessary to transmit this Divine Life in its purity from one generation to another, until the end of time.

Since we cannot conceive of Life, nor of its transmission and preservation, otherwise than in its incorporation into a visible organism, it follows we can have no real vital communion with Christ, except in connection with his body, the Church.

The Church is therefore a visible organic body instituted by Christ to teach those Divine Truths, and convey that Divine Life to men, which moved Him to come down from heaven, and unite His Godhead to our manhood in one personality in the flesh.

The Church is the body of Christ, the organ

* St. John, c. xv.

of Divine Light and Life to men, and the idea of an invisible Church is a sheer piece of subterfuge to escape her claims to allegiance, to reject Christianity, and still pass for a Christian.



XXXII.

Authority.

"Teach no men to be slaves,
But with high minds obey."

F. W. FABER.

THERE may be some readers of these pages who do not understand how a Catholic can consistently uphold the authority of Reason, and at the same time maintain as strenuously the authority of the Catholic Church. They have been taught, or led to believe, that Reason and the Church were antagonistic ; that to be a Catholic was blindly to submit Reason to exterior authority, to abandon conscience to the direction of her priests, and that by so doing one might rest entirely secure of his future welfare.

Every instructed person knows, or ought to know, that there are several primary, independent,

and authoritative sources of truth. Among others, and the first, is Reason ; then, there is the Holy Ghost dwelling in the heart ; also exterior divine Revelation ; and besides these, the Church. Each of these sources of truth is unerring, as they have God for their origin ; and cannot conflict with each other. Within their proper limits they confirm each other, and afford a mutual support ; and Catholicity, which means universal truth, includes these several authorities acting in perfect harmony, and producing in the minds of her believers a most firm and entire conviction of the truths which she teaches.

As regards the authority of Reason, this has been sufficiently explained in what has preceded. Not a single step can be made in the advance towards truth without the open or tacit admission of her unerring authority. Jesus Christ constantly appealed to the decisions of Reason in favor of his divine mission, and in defence of his doctrines. His Apostles followed his example, and affirmed the authority of Reason by counselling their disciples to “try the spirits” and “prove all things.” The Pontiffs and Councils of the Church have been no less jealous of the authority and rights of Reason. They have ever sustained these by their decisions, and by condemning those who would depreciate

the value of Reason ; knowing full well that a religion not founded on the convictions of Reason is worthless, degrading to man and displeasing to God.

Christ not only appealed to the authority of Reason in support of his religion, he also promised to send to his disciples the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, which should lead them into all truth, and to come with his heavenly Father, and make their hearts the dwelling place of the most august Trinity.* Now, it will not answer to profess to believe the teachings of Christ as the words of divine Truth, and ignore the authority of the Holy Ghost indwelling in the soul.

This is good Protestantism, some one may suppose, and even say that sentiments of such a nature clash with the doctrines and spirit of the Romish Church.

Be not so ready, indulgent reader, in drawing conclusions. A religion which teaches the "total depravity" of Human Nature excludes necessarily the authority of Reason, and there is no conceivable method by which a soul, wholly corrupt, can ever become a fit dwelling place of the All-pure and Holy One. Purity of heart and interior life is impossible on Protestant principles, and union

* John c. 14.

of the soul with God an abomination. For sanctification, in the Protestant sense, is nothing else than the covering over of man's inherent corruption with the cloak of Christ's righteousness.

Sanctification, according to Catholic principles, is entirely different. It is an intrinsic work of grace, which restores the soul to its primitive purity, and adorns it with its ancient beauty, making it thus a fit temple of the Holy Ghost.

This is evident from the perusal of any of the writings of the spiritual authors of the Catholic faith. Let one here suffice :—

“God alone,” says Father Lallement, “has right of sovereignty over hearts. Neither secular powers nor the church herself extend their dominion thus far. What passes there depends not on them. There God alone is king. It is his own proper realm. There he establishes his throne of grace. This interior kingdom it is that constitutes his glory. Our perfection and our happiness consist in the subjection of our hearts to this empire of God.”

“Our perfection depends wholly on the fidelity with which we have coöperated with the movements of the Holy Ghost and followed his guidance, and we may say that the sum of the spiritual life consists in observing the ways and the movements

of the Spirit of God in our soul, and in fortifying them, employing for this purpose all the exercise of prayer, spiritual reading, sacraments, the practice of virtues and good works."

"We ought to receive every inspiration as a word of God, proceeding from His wisdom, His mercy, His infinite goodness, and capable of operating in us marvellous effects, if we put no obstacle in its way. . . . It would draw us out of our moral nothingness to a supernatural participation in the beatitude of God." *

The whole body of doctrine on spiritual life in the Catholic Church is based upon the fact of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of her faithful children. So sacred does the Catholic Church hold this inward oracle of the Truth, and of such authority, that the soul, refusing to believe in its divine communications, would be no less guilty of the sin of infidelity and disobedience, than if she refused to believe the recorded revelation of Holy Writ, or resisted the divinely-constituted authority of the Church itself. Sanctity, in the Catholic sense, consists in faithfully following in all our thoughts, affections, and actions, the suggestions of the Holy Ghost. In short, Catholicity inaugurates the inward oracle of the soul, and claims for its dictates a divine authority.

* The Spiritual Doctrine, pp. 41, 132, 137.

But we shall be asked "What else was Protestantism than the rising up of the human mind against the crushing tyranny exercised by Rome over the souls of men?"

We suppose the Reader has read the foregoing chapter on the necessity and Divine authority of the Church, and we suppose also that there is no reason to show that the Catholic Church holds most firmly to the Divine Revelation of Holy Writ. If this be granted, then we have four distinct sources of religious truth, namely, Reason, the Holy Ghost in the soul, the Bible, and the Church. Now, if the Church be a divine authority, whose office is not to increase but define and confirm the divinely-revealed truths, its exercise can but be consonant with Reason, the inward light of the Holy Ghost, and Sacred Scripture. The idea of any clashing between them is absurd, and can never enter an intelligent and well-regulated mind.

Failing to see this divinely-constituted order, men otherwise intelligent, form the most extravagant, absurd, and even monstrous notions concerning the Catholic Religion. Even the most distinguished among Protestants, seldom if ever rise in their vision to the view of the sublime harmony of Christianity as developed by the Catholic Church. They seem to believe that Reason and Religion

are opposed to each other, and that the only road to Religion is by subjugating or sacrificing Reason. Thus M. Guizot, in speaking of the relations of Reason and Religion, says :—

“In the natural order, man exercises a part of the action and of the power ; but, in the supernatural order, he has only to make an act of self-submission.” *

If M. Guizot means by this that “man exercises no part of the action and of the power,” in accepting the supernatural order, this would entirely exclude Reason from the sphere of Christianity ; and Religion without Reason is superstition, is fanaticism, and the degradation of man. There is a different kind of exercise of Reason in the natural order from that of the supernatural order ; but one is no less a “part of the action and of the power” of Reason than the other. If any distinction is to be made, it is in favor of the exercise of Reason in the supernatural order, for there it has for its object the highest order of truth, and, therefore, its most sublime exercise and assertion. From this point of view M. Guizot’s statement is incorrect. Again, there is not only an intelligent exercise of Reason in the acceptance of the supernatural order, but to a certain degree

* Etudes Morales.

an exercise of Reason on the truths so received. For all supernatural truths have an intelligible side to our natural Reason, and therefore our Reason may be, and *should* be, exercised on them ; and when it is elevated by grace to the supernatural order, it is wonderful how much of the supernatural becomes intelligible. The statement therefore that "man in the supernatural order has only to make an act of self-submission," is an injustice done to the rights of Reason, and conveys a false and injurious impression of the nature of Christianity.

The same distinguished writer makes in the same connection another statement no less erroneous and injurious to the true principles of Christianity.

"Authority," he says, "is the appanage of Religion: Liberty that of Philosophy." *

There is in this a twofold error ; for Religion has no less need of liberty than philosophy has need of authority. Religion without liberty is a sheer imposition and tyranny ; philosophy, without the authority of first principles, is downright imbecility. Religious homage, to be agreeable to God, must spring from the free assent of a reasonable creature, and philosophy cannot take a single

* Ibid.

step in the discovery of truth without admitting, in advance, the authority of certain given primary truths.

Strange to say, that the fundamental errors broached by Luther, and which are found in our examination of Protestantism, that Christianity is antagonistic to Reason and the liberty of the Will, should serve as the basis of such an enlightened and cultivated intellect as that of M. Guizot !

An eloquent writer, in reply to M. Guizot, asks, "What is Christianity? It is authority. What is Protestantism? It is free-inquiry." *

By Christianity the above writer means Catholicity, and Catholicity by no means excludes or forbids free-inquiry. Catholic authority upholds man's right to free-inquiry in all that is possible for man to know. This was shown in the chapters twenty-three and four, on Reason, and by the words of the present reigning Pontiff. And what is this saying but an evident truth, that it is the duty of every reasonable being to cultivate his intellectual faculties, by the acquisition of the knowledge of all that may be known. To pretend to free-inquiry in matters which lie beyond the grasp of our intellectual faculties, is the proclamation of folly. Catholicity, therefore, unites divine authority with perfect free-inquiry.

* Louis Veuillot.

But we are at a loss to discover how "Protestantism" can be called "free-inquiry" when it denies to man the possession of Reason, denies the liberty of Will, and insists upon his total depravity. Nor can we understand if this be the deplorable state of man, of what use free-inquiry would be to him. Free-inquiry, on Protestant principles, is as impossible as it is absurd.

Our readers must not think us fastidious in dwelling on these points, for the force of the whole discussion turns on the question, What is Religion? What is Protestantism?

"What is Protestantism?" asks a celebrated Catholic writer. "If there be any thing constant in Protestantism," he replies, "it is undoubtedly the substitution of private judgment for public authority. This is, properly speaking, its fundamental principle." *

If the illustrious Balmes intended in this definition to convey the idea that the Catholic Church suppresses the free and lawful exercise of private judgment, he undoubtedly spoke incorrectly. Catholicity addresses itself to our private judgment, and on its decision the whole edifice of Religion is raised. Private judgment is personal, judgment, and its exercise is involved in the idea of putting

* Balmes.

it aside. Protestantism did not therefore assert the right of private judgment, for its exercise had always and ever must exist. There is no conceivable way of getting rid of it, if desired.

This is acknowledged by Protestants. "One often hears it said," writes Thomas Carlyle, "that Protestantism introduced a new era radically different from any the world had ever seen before: the era of 'private judgment' as they call it. This 'private judgment' at bottom is not a new thing in the world. There is nothing generically new or peculiar in the Reformation . . . Liberty of 'private judgment,' if we will consider, must at all times have existed in the world. Dante had not put out his eyes, or tied shackles on himself; he was at home in that Catholicity of his, a free-seeing soul in it." *

Protestantism was not then the substitution of something which before was not, or which was not in an undisturbed possession of its rightful sphere of activity. Our lamented author did not perhaps intend to say that it was.

What, then, is Protestantism? Protestantism, in its practical development, is the exaggeration of the authority of private judgment to the entire exclusion of all other authorities.

* Heroes.

The truth of this is demonstrated by its history. The first decided step of Protestantism was necessarily the denial of the Divine Authority of the Church ; for if the Church had not erred, there could be no grounds for an opposition to it. The second step of Protestantism was the denial of the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures, especially of those parts which supported the doctrines of the Church so plainly that they left no possible means of perverting that meaning. Hence Luther began by rejecting the Epistle of St. James, since it so plainly teaches that man is not justified by faith alone, Luther's opinion, but by faith and works, the Catholic doctrine. And he also threw strong suspicions on several other portions of Holy Writ. His disciples, following his example with their pitiless exegesis, have either left nothing standing of the Bible as authentic, except its two covers, or, as with others who take a different route, have left its contents untouched, but destroyed its authority, by proving to a demonstration that it is nothing but a myth—an old wife's Fable. And, as the last expression of genuine Protestantism, the modern German philosophers who plume themselves on the title of being the truest children of Luther, proclaim that " God is only man's intuition of his own nature."

Thus Protestantism, by force of the exaggeration of the authority of private judgment, has overthrown every other authority, and ends by deifying it, in declaring "Man is his own God : *Homo sibi Deus !*"

But each of these authorities has its perfect expression in Catholicity, revolving around the authority of the Church as their centre in perfect harmony. Hence it is that "the Catholic, and he alone, has within him that union of external, with internal notes of God's favor, which sheds the light of conviction over his soul, and makes him fearless in his faith, and calm and thankful in his hope." *

There are those perhaps who will say that "the Catholic Church of the nineteenth century respects Reason and the inward witness to truth, but this she has learned from Protestantism. And her present attitude in this regard, far from being real and sincere, springs from her deep and usual crafty policy."

This needs no other refutation than the fact that the Catholic Church held, long before Protestantism was dreamed of, precisely the same doctrines she holds now. As a specimen of her spirit, we shall give a short extract from the writings of

* Newman.

Mother Juliana, an anchorite nun, who lived in the time of King Edward the Third, three centuries before the so-called Reformation :—

“ By three things,” she says, “ man standeth in this life : by which three God is worshipped, and we be sped, kept, and saved. The first is, use of man’s kindly Reason. The second is, the common teaching of Holy Church. The third is, the gracious working of the Holy Ghost. God is the ground of our kindly Reason ; and God is the teaching of the Holy Church ; and God is the Holy Ghost. And all the sundry gifts to which He will we have regard, and according us thereto : for these work in us continually altogether, and these be great things.” *

The effect of Protestantism on the Catholic Church was thus to call forth her energies in defence of those truths which were attacked. As the divine authority of the Church was the first which was attacked by Protestants, this was the first which demanded a defence from Catholics. When the authority of Reason was denied, she was there to uphold its claims. As the Champion of Truth, she was ready to defend its cause whenever, wherever, and by whomsoever attacked. One has but to read the decisions of her Pontiffs and Councils to be fully convinced of this.

* Revelation of Divine Love.

The Catholic truth having at length been successfully defended against the assaults of the countless errors of the sixteenth century, the Church will stand forth with a greater consciousness of her possession of the truth, and continue her Divine mission in the world with more than her former splendor.

XXXIII.

Appliances.

“ With solemn forms, benign solitudes,
But each a sacramental type and pledge
Of Grace, the Church inweaves a sheltering hedge
Around her garden vale.”—*DE VFRE.*

IT has been shown in the last two chapters that we are required to observe the ceremonies of religious worship. Hitherto we have taken our point of vision from Human Nature ; let us continue to do so, and see what relation these appliances of Religion bear to it.

Men are not angels, and what constitutes man a distinct being in the order of creation, is the possession of an immortal, spiritual soul, with a perishable, material body. Our bodies, as we all know, are gifted by their Creator with what are called the senses, through which, as through win-

dows, the soul looks out upon, and comes in contact with the world around it. And through the same avenues, the outward returns, stamping indelibly its impression on the soul, and exciting its deepest emotions.

Men are also aware of the psychological fact, that the imagination has a powerful influence in swaying their actions, and even their judgments. Now, the imagination is closely allied to the senses, and is easily exerted through them.

Hence these torch-light processions, these popular songs and loud hurrahs, preceding a popular election. By such machinery the senses are struck, the imagination excited, and an enthusiasm enkindled in the hearts of men. And, other things being equal, the most successful results have been attained by the most effective appeals of this kind.

Why this military dress and martial music—a people's national air, its flag, eagle, lion, lily? What mean these things? Lo, the battle field! the cry, "to arms!" the flag unfurled! the nation's music and watchword sounded forth, Liberty! the Queen! l'Empereur! And now the men whose blood before flowed sluggishly through their veins, are at a flash alive with fiery courage, brave as lions, reckless of danger or death,

and with every nerve strained, every heart beating as with one pulsation, they rush into the conflict. What now has so transformed these men into heroes? Was it some instrument mighty in itself? By no means; a flag is but a piece of bunting—no more. A national song is only a few vibrations of the air—nothing else. The eagle is a simple fowl, of the genus *falco*. Ah, but tread upon that piece of bunting with contempt, and you will arouse the fiercest passions of resentment! Those simple vibrations of the air have the power, when felt, to move and arouse the passions of an entire people. A nation's genius and affections are so embodied in that eagle, that the sight of it alone will animate a whole army to the highest pitch of enthusiasm and heroic valor.

Such is Human Nature, and such are the influences brought to bear upon men for the achievement of the mightiest results.

Surely, then, if it be the great end of Religion to direct heavenward all our energies to their sublime destiny, it ought not carelessly to overlook or regard with contempt such powerful auxiliaries for controlling and swaying men. A Religion which has man's highest interests at heart, will do its utmost to engage these common instincts of our nature to aid in the accomplishment of its

beneficent and glorious purposes, especially when it is considered that not only are all men more or less influenced by the senses and imagination, but that most men are so constituted, that these, and the affections and passions immediately connected with them, act a predominant part in their lives. They are by far more impressed by what appeals to the senses than by what addresses Reason. Now, if Religion would do its duty towards this, by far the larger class of men, it must reach their higher nature through these exterior avenues.

Religion, therefore, in order to fulfil its divine mission towards man, must not only present to him satisfactory solutions of the dark problems of Reason, she must also by the fitness and splendor of her Worship captivate his senses and imagination, and thus lead him to consecrate his whole being to God.

Before we explain, however, the relations which the Catholic Worship bears to this aspect of Human Nature, let us see what Protestantism says to it. How does Protestantism propose to meet these essential wants? Does it give a welcome to them, or does it exclude them from its sanctuary with an unnatural and hostile spirit?

The votaries of the Great Reformation, in their zeal for purifying Christian Worship, plundered

or destroyed in the houses of God all that was costly and beautiful, that is, all that was calculated to charm the senses and captivate the imagination, and direct the soul heavenward. Alas ! their zeal was not satisfied with this ; they attacked the rites and ceremonies, many of which were instituted by the Saviour, and others hallowed by the practice of the apostles and the early Christians. These were denounced as being grossly superstitious and damnably idolatrous. Christian worship was reduced, in many cases, to the delivery of a dull and prolix sermon, with a hymn at the commencement and the close, led off by a sexton with a nasal twang ; and this was called, forsooth, “a godly worship,” while others carried out the Protestant view of Christian worship to its logical results by abolishing the priesthood, and cast aside all sacraments, ceremonies, customs, and religious rites.

Thus, Protestantism, by repudiating religious ceremonies, has unfeelingly left an essential and important part of man’s nature unprovided for, and by this meagre and one-sided view of Christianity has deprived itself of the most powerful and popular means of making men Christians, and leading them to the great end of their existence. And now, how stands the case with Catholicity ?

Does she regard this aspect of our nature with a friendly eye, endeavor to meet its demands, and spiritualize and elevate these instincts by holy influences to the highest and purest aims ?

Who can describe the perfect and complete adaptation of Catholic Worship to the instinctive tastes and longings of man's nature ?

“For not of earthly moulding are her forms.”

What words can convey the impressions not unfrequently made on beholding even the material Temple of Catholic Worship, whose walls are adorned with the most precious works of genius, inspired by her own faith and love, and in which her marvellous Ritual is realized in stone ? Whatever be one's creed, few can stand before her altars without experiencing a sentiment of religious awe, and something akin to a benediction. “No one,” says Madame de Staël, “ever enters into the Catholic Churches without feeling an emotion which does the soul good, and like a sacred ablution imparts to it strength and its word.” *

“Happy are they,” writes another, in a similar strain, “whose faith needs no such appliances, who feel the overshadowing presence of God alike in solitude and society, upon the mountain top, in

* De Lalle. tom. 1, p. 64.

the market-place, in the tasteless parish church, and around the domestic hearth. But with most of us the world is too much present. Its cares engross ; its pleasures intoxicate ; its sorrows and disappointments oppress us. Few are the moments in which our spirits lie exposed to the highest influences, neither darkened by despair, nor giddy through self-confidence, nor influenced by earth-born passions. For nature, conscious of inborn struggle, of wings that are often clogged, and sometimes paralyzed—these glorious structures are reared ! Their walls and spaces seem yet instinct with the love and faith that laid the stones and carved the saints. Transient and soon effaced as the impression which they leave may be, they are yet aids and allies for which he who is most conscious of his weakness will be the most grateful.” *

If the material Temples of the Catholic Faith have so religious an influence on the mind, and that it has a non-catholic witness ought to be satisfactory proof, how much greater must be that of her ancient Rites and sacred Ceremonies ! In proof of this let a philosopher speak :—

“ Happy are they,” says the eloquent Cousin, “ who at Rome, at the Vatican, in the solemnities

* Hillard's Italy, vol. 2, 1853.

of the Catholic Worship, have heard the melodies of Leo, of Durante, of Pergolese, from the old consecrated text. They have had a moment's glimpse of heaven, their soul may have entered therein without distinction of rank, of country, of even belief, by the degrees which itself would choose, by wings invisible and mysterious, composed and tissued, so to speak, of all simple, natural, universal sentiments, which, on all points of the earth, draw from the breast of the human creature a sigh towards the other world." *

Now let us give place to the testimony of a Protestant Presbyterian minister in favor of the effect of Catholic Worship.

"I often go," says the Rev. H. M. Field, "to the convent of Trinita dei Monti, to hear the nuns sing their evening hymn, and it would be quite impossible for me to describe the effect upon my feelings. I listen till my heart dissolves. It seems as if some choir of the Blessed were chanting a celestial hymn ; as if that tender and plaintive melody, which comes to bear up my soul from gloom, were the distant music of Angels.

" Ofttimes, too, at such hour, I see the most simple and earnest devotion kneeling on the pavement of the Church. I ask no questions, but

* Du vrai et de l'art.

there is a look that tells me that the thoughts of the worshipper are fixed on something beyond the world,—a look of sorrow and yet of peace. And often I say to myself, as I see men and women who have led a life of extreme poverty or suffering kneeling on the Church floor: While we sneer at their worship, these poor beings are ascending to heaven.” *

Volumes might be filled with the testimony of Protestants to illustrate the religious effectiveness of Catholic Devotions; but we can give only one more, and that from a Methodist preacher.

“It is difficult for a Protestant,” says Dr. Durbin, “unaccustomed to the pomp and pagantry of the Catholic service in Europe, to conceive of the power over the imagination and feelings of the multitude, nay, even of cultivated minds, educated in the midst of these magical associations. Luther says himself, that while walking next the Host in a procession, the thought that the Lord himself was present suddenly struck his imagination, and so overawed him, that it was with difficulty he went forward; a cold sweat came over him; he staggered, and thought he should die in the agony of fear. What, then, must the illiterate multitude feel, whose faith obeys im-

* A Letter from Rome.

plicitly the impression made upon the senses? And in cultivated minds, in proportion to the natural feeling of the individual, and the depth of his belief in these representations, will be the intensity of his devotion under their influence. Nay, even for an enlightened Protestant there is an elevation and majesty in many of these forms, pressing into their service as they do the mighty influence of the higher arts, filling the eye with images of beauty, and the ear with the richest tones of harmony, that enchain his attention, and captivate his imagination.”*

These minds, so appreciative of the influence and impressiveness of the Catholic Worship, are only in the outward courts of her temples. What would they experience were their souls flooded with sufficient light to see in all their wonderful significance these tremendous mysteries, and their hearts open to receive the exquisite consolations which these solemn ceremonies express and convey!

Let us enter, with such a one, a Catholic Church, but let us select one of those noble structures which stand forth so grandly as emblems of Catholic Faith, piety and genius. The high-wrought vaulted roof, the tall aspiring arches, the

* Observations in Europe, p. 73.

angels with their outspread wings, as if guarding with their sculptured beauty the sacred treasures within, the statues of the holy Apostles, martyrs and saints, in attitude of heavenly contemplation or ecstatic love ; the stained windows with their beautifully executed Scripture stories, and as we advance, appearing above the great altar the image of our crucified Saviour, looking down with the suffering love and pity which God alone can feel ; the tomb-shaped altar and the lighted tapers, carrying us back to the shrines of the martyrs upon which the primitive Christians offered up the sacrifice in the dark Catacombs of Rome ; flowers the most generous and gracious of nature's gifts, with their beauty and fragrance embellishing the altar where bread and wine, nature's flesh and blood, await the offering,—the moment now has arrived for the great sacrifice to begin,—preceded by white-robed boys swinging their silver censers, enter the priest, deacon, and sub-deacon, with folded hands, and robed in vestments of gorgeous hues and richest textures ; the high-born woman and lowly peasant, the master and the slave, the learned and the illiterate, gray-headed old age and rosy youth, the sick and the sorrowful, the clean and the unclean, all classes without distinction of ranks or race before the Catholic altar kneeling side

by side, all equal in the presence of that crucified God, only more precious in His sight the humblest and poorest of them all.

But the Sacrifice has begun, the Priest at the foot of the altar has made the sign of the Cross upon his breast, invoking the names of the most holy Trinity ; subdued strains of the organ are floating among the graceful arches, clouds of incense ascend as in solemn but varied tones the prayers, the Epistle, and the Gospel are sung ; in joyous notes the Priest intones the "Gloria in Excelsis," whilst the choir takes up and continues to the end in exultant strains this angelic hymn of praise ; in more earnest strains begins the "Credo," and right well is it that this should be sung, as this "Credo" is the elementary expression not only of the true, but also of the good and beautiful.

The most solemn part of this august Sacrifice now commences by the Priest's chanting the "Preface ;" he begins with the following appeals to the devotion of the people,—*"Dominus vobiscum,"* The Lord be with you, *"Et cum spiritu tuo,"* And with thy spirit, the faithful respond ; *"Sursum Corda,"* Lift up your hearts, *"Habemus ad Dominum,"* We have lifted them up unto the Lord ; *"Gratias agamus Domino Deo nostro,"* Let

us give thanks to the Lord our God, "*Dignum et justum est*," It is meet and just ; the Priest then continues alone the Preface in a chant which recalls the worship of ancient Greece and Rome ; thus between the Priest and the people alternating with sweet and solemn strains of music, amid rising clouds of sweet-smelling incense, the blaze of tapers, the sound of tinkling bells, divine worship goes on ;—in this manner all the senses have been appealed to, each with its own peculiar charm ; the imagination is captivated by what is hallowed and beautiful, and the mind is elevated to the contemplation of heavenly things as the heart is filled with devotion and awe ;—all that can combine to make a worship grand, solemn, and imposing,—Heaven and Earth, Men and Angels, and the most precious gifts of nature and art are divinely joined in this one grand act of Religion !

But still more is designed to complete this act of Divine Worship, and this is God ; God, not as in the Jewish Temple, His presence concealed behind a cloud, but truly and really the present Godhead in his own Divine Person. Neither is this refused ;—at the awful moment a hushed silence reigns throughout the kneeling throng, which is only broken by the sound of bells, by the

falling of the censer chains, and softened tones of the organ ; and now the Priest, by the divine might of his ordination, pronounces the sacred words of consecration over the elements of bread and wine, and their substance is changed into the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, where-with is his Soul and Divinity. Behold God, the great God, the all-loving and eternal God, really, truly, and personally present on the altar of Christians ; while they with clasped hands, bowed down heads, humbled minds and hearts, penetrated by gratitude and love, adore in their Temple Him whom the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain !

And does this really sublime and all-comprehensive act of Worship end here ? Was there ever one conceived so wonderfully adapted to man's twofold nature of matter and spirit ? "It is surely complete," may well exclaim the earnest soul who entered with us. But no, Catholic Worship has not in this reached its highest expression. There is a more sublime act of Religion than prayer, or praise, or even adoration, and that is, Communion with God. For Divine Worship, to reach its highest aim, must end in union of the soul with God, and that in the most direct and perfect way possible.

The Sacrifice continues and becomes the Sacra-

ment of Communion of Love. The Priest lifts up his voice and chants aloud "the Lord's Prayer," and while reciting in secret several prayers preparatory to communion, the choir sings the "Agnus Dei;" after having received the consecrated elements, he communicates the Holy Sacrament to the faithful. Oh wonderful mystery! God dwells in the hearts of his creatures corporally! Man participates in the Divinity! God and Man become One!

Prayers of thanksgiving follow; the Deacon, turning to the people, sings "Ite missa est," Go, the mass is ended; the Priest kisses the altar where lie the relics of martyrs and saints, and, turning to the people, raises his consecrated hands and bestows upon them the "Benediction;" the "last Gospel" is read in silence, and the Priest, with his white-robed boys and assistants, leaves the altar and the sanctuary, for the great function of the Catholic Worship is now indeed completed.

Oh that we could find language to convey that which passes within the hearts of pious Catholics at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass! But we are not writing for them; our purpose is to carry some light into the minds of those who, not possessing the precious gift of Catholic Faith, see only the splendor of her visible glory, and not the Divinity which is within.

Although the celebration of Solemn High Mass is the grandest rite of the Catholic Ritual, yet it by no means exhausts the rich treasures of her ceremonial expression. This allows her to give to her children full liberty to choose what is best suited to their tastes, without requiring, as among the sects, each individual to constrain himself to one, fixed, invariable form. Like a true mother, she supplies so generously from her unfailing wealth, that the most ardent imagination may be satiated, whilst she leaves the more retired at liberty to adopt what they may find most congenial to the spirit of their devotion. She is like a garden filled with every variety of enchanting flowers, through which her children may pass, selecting those which please them most; and, whatever their choice may be, she is equally content, since her only aim is to attract each soul in its own natural way, and lead it to worship the one, only, true God.

Hence the Catholic Church is equally adapted to the class of minds which is less influenced and impressed by religious ceremonies, minds of a simple form and mould. She does not require the presence of such at those functions when it appears as if she exhausted her rich treasures to engage the senses and captivate the imagination. To

such the great mysteries and doctrines of the Christian faith are in their simplicity equally impressive, and even perhaps more so, when unadorned and expressed in the plainest manner. For such there is the Low Mass, with its simple and rapid rites, so silent and solemn, that the most rigid Spiritualist would fail to suffer distraction. Her Temples, too, are always open, within which one may retire, and, in heavenly silence and repose, rest in the presence of God. She sanctions the spirit which leads the hermit into the desert, there alone with the beauty of nature to commune with Heaven, no less than that which asks the aid of her magnificent service to enable it to rise to the contemplation of the First True, the First Good, the First Fair.

XXXIV.

Fellowship.

"My spirit yearns to bring
The lost ones back—yearns with desire intense—
And struggles hard to wring
The bolts apart, and pluck thy captives thence."

BRYANT.

MAN possesses powers which extend far beyond the visible world, into the realms of the unseen, for he is essentially a spiritual being. One of the deepest yearnings of his soul is to communicate with those of the spirit world.

"That the dead are seen no more," says Dr. Johnson, "I will not undertake to maintain, against the concurrent testimony of all ages and of all nations. There is no people, rude or learned, among whom apparitions of the dead are not related and believed. This opinion, which prevails as far as human nature is diffused, could become universal only by its truth; those who

never heard of one another, would not have agreed in a tale which nothing but experience can make credible. That it is doubted by single cavillers, can very little weaken the general evidence; and some who deny it with their tongues, confess it by their fears." *

"Let us then not imagine," says the celebrated Dr. Channing, "that the usefulness of the good is finished at death. Then rather does it begin. Let us not judge of their state by associations drawn from the stillness and silence of the grave. They have gone to the abodes of life, of warmth and action. They have gone to fill a larger place in the system of God. Death has expanded their powers. The clogs and fetters of the perishable body have fallen off, that they may act more freely and with more delight in the grand system of creation It would be grateful to believe that their influence reaches to the present state, and we certainly are not forbidden to indulge the hope." †

It is not only consoling to believe thus, but so deeply rooted is the conviction, that there are moments when it asserts its vitality, in spite of our creeds or ourselves.

In Dr. Johnson's journal of March 28, 1753,

* *Rasselas*.

† *Memoirs*, p. 276.

we find : "I kept this day as the anniversary of my Tetty's death, with prayers and tears in the morning. In the evening, I prayed for her conditionally, if it were lawful." * And in a prayer which he wrote, he supplicates that he may "enjoy the good effects of the attention and ministration of his departed wife." †

Here is a true expression of a secret and spontaneous instinct of the human heart ; for who believes, when kneeling by the grave of the loved and lost, that the sacred ties of friendship and affection, eternal as the laws of his being, are wholly severed ? Does he not rather, at that hour, become aware, for the first time, how close were the bonds that bound him to the departed, and exclaim, in grateful relief : The living and the dead indeed make one communion !

Dr. Channing, in writing to a friend on the death of his child, says : "Our child is lost to our sight, but not to our faith and hope, perhaps not to our beneficent influences. Is there no means of gratifying our desire of promoting his happiness ? The living and dead make one communion." ‡

"Very curious and interesting as a trait of character and feeling is the passage," says Mrs. Jameson, in speaking of Niebuhr, "in which he

* Boswell's Life.

† Ibid.

‡ Memoirs, p. 233.

represents himself, in the dangerous confinement of his second wife, as praying to his first wife for succor."

"In my terrible anxiety," he says, "I prayed most earnestly and entreated my Milly, too, for help. I comforted Gretchen by telling her that Milly would send her help. When she was at the worst, she sighed out, 'Oh, cannot your Amelia send me a blessing?'"

"This is curious," continues the narrator of the anecdote, "from a Protestant and a Philosopher. It shows that there may be something nearly allied to our common nature in the Roman Catholic invocation to the saints, and to the souls of the dead." *

The religions of all nations, with each individual consciousness, witness to the belief of mankind in a communion between the soul and spirits, between the living and the departed. The ancient religions of Egypt, China, Greece, Rome, of the Britons, Australians and American Indians, give the same testimony. Also the belief in magis, soothsaying, conjurations, necromancy, and every other superstitious practice, which places us, as is supposed, in secret relations with the inhabitants of another world.

* *Thoughts and Memoirs*, p. 201.

The demon of Socrates, the spectre of Brutus, the guardian of Cæsar, give the same confirmation. The histories of Mahomet, Cromwell, Napoleon, Jacob Bœhme, Swedenborg, Rousseau, Fourier, and the works of all the celebrated poets, both ancient and modern, are stamped with the strongest evidence of the working of this instinct in the soul ; and they owe not a little of their genius and popularity to its strange workings and fascinating power.

One of the highest purposes of Religion, if it means any thing, is to reveal to man the invisible world, and bring him into closer communion with its inhabitants, by teaching him to live more completely under its spiritual influences, because he is destined to move in its sphere, and there, amidst its glorious spirits, enjoy perfect bliss. Religion must do this, for, if she fails, men seek, in a blind hope, the gratification of this instinct elsewhere.

Hence the origin and extension of spiritualism in Protestant communities, and the vain endeavors to quiet the restlessness of unsatisfied hearts by table-tipping, rappings, mediums, and other fatal experiments ; for Protestantism has signally failed to direct the religious nature of man to a perfect development.

“The number of spiritualists,” says a public

journal, "is gradually increasing in this country, if we may judge from the number of journals which are devoted to its interests. There are nine weekly newspapers and six monthly magazines engaged in defending its principles and maintaining its cause. Seven of the media practice the healing art, their pharmacopœia being a collection of recipes from the spirit land. Some merely describe the character of diseases. Some of them make use of the electro-medicated baths, which are made ready by females.

"Other media remain at the threshold of the science, content with the first step of induction. These tip tables, write letters from the other world, describe persons "out of the form," set chairs and bells in motion, and phosphoric fire . . . Others test the truth of their claims by communicating with the dead, whose awful and mysterious fate is developed to anxious friends, not often in the language they were wont to use when living, or with much regard to orthography, etymology, syntax or prosody.

"A society exists for the diffusion of spiritual knowledge, which is in full activity; and there are eighteen lecturers, of both sexes, who are recognized as authorities in their peculiar vocation. There are initiatory circles for the conversion of

unbelievers, and others where things unutterable are witnessed by the spirit communists.

“ The effect of spiritualism on individual character has thus far not been happy. In most of the cases those persons who have given themselves up to it, appear to be completely disorganized. They leave their former pursuits in life, they sink from their professional and business standing, and strange and wild expressions fasten upon their countenances—‘ they seem to walk in a vain show, disquieting themselves in vain.’ Suicide has attended in the train, and every few days we hear of departures for the spirit-land, of the most singular and melancholy character.”

These are the deadly fruits of the religion of the 16th century, which falsely charged the ancient Christian faith with superstition, and pretended to emancipate the human mind by a purified gospel. “ Men had repudiated angels and saints,” says one of its own votaries, “ but they still devoutly believed in devils and witches. The benign miracles of female charity were the inventions and impositions of a lying priesthood ; but woo unto him who doubted the power of an old woman to ride on a broomstick, or of a young woman to entertain Satan as her emissary in mischief ! All the women who perished by judicial condemnation,

for heresy, in the days of the Inquisition, did not equal the number of women condemned judicially as witches, hanged, tortured, burned, drowned like small dogs, in the first century of the Reformed Church, and these horrors were enacted in the most civilized countries in Europe, by grave magistrates and ecclesiastics, who were proud of having thrown off the Roman yoke and of reading their Bible." *

And now, what direction does the Catholic religion give to these spiritual instincts of man which point beyond the grave ?

In the first place, it teaches that man has the most intimate relations with the brightest and most beautiful of all God's creatures, the Blessed Angels.

"The Angels are commissioned," so teaches the Catechism of the Council of Trent, "by Divine Providence to guard the human race, and to be present with every man to protect him from injury. As parents, when their children have occasion to travel a dangerous way infested by robbers, appoint persons to guard and assist them in case of an attack, so has our Heavenly Father placed over each of us, in our journey towards our heavenly country, Angels, guarded by whose vigilance and

* Mrs. Jameson. *Sisters of Charity*, p. 283.

assistance, we may escape the ambushes of our enemies, repel their fierce attacks, and proceed directly on our journey, secured by their guiding protection against the devious tracks into which our treacherous enemy would mislead us, and pursuing steadily the path that leads to heaven."

In regard to "the important advantages which flow to the human race from this special superintending Providence, the functions and the administrations of which are intrusted to Angels, who hold a middle place between man and the Divinity," the same Catechism cites several instances, among others that of "the Angel Raphael, who was appointed by God the companion and guide of Tobias," and "the Angel who delivered the Prince of the Apostles from prison," and it concludes in the following words: "The Sacred Scriptures abound in examples which give us an idea of the magnitude of the benefit conferred on us by the ministry of Angels, whose tutelary protection is not confined to particular occasions or persons, but extends to each individual of the human race, from the hour of birth."*

Consonant with Catholic belief, Saint Thomas, the Angelic Doctor, teaches, "that there are also orders of Angels who guard and protect communities and nations."†

* On the word "Father" in the Lord's Prayer.

† 2, 113, Art. 3.

On the same subject Saint Augustine beautifully says : “ From the bosom of the sovereign beatitude which the Angels possess in the holy city, the celestial Jerusalem, from which we are now exiled, these blessed spirits watch over us, in order to bring us back to this common country, where we will one day be satiated in drawing with them from the divine source of eternal truth.” *

The ground for the honor paid to the Angels in the Catholic Church, is that law of our being which exacts of us homage to exalted dignity and virtue of every kind. The Angels are the ideal of our own spirituality realized, and our communication with them tends to elevate and to assimilate our natures in purity and perfection to theirs. Our devout affection for these purest creations refines the heart, and with a tender confidence aids our approach to our common Parent.

Our faculty of communion with the spiritual world is not exhausted by our relations with the Angels. The Catholic Faith teaches, that “ The Saints, reigning with Christ, offer up their prayers to God, for men ; that it is good and profitable suppliantly to invoke them, and to have recourse to their prayers, help, and assistance, to obtain favors from God, through his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who alone is our Redeemer and Saviour.” †

* On Psalm 62.

† Council of Trent. Ses. 25 De Invoc.

The Catholic doctrine regarding the Saints is, therefore, two-fold. In the first place, that the Saints of God make intercession before him for their brethren on earth ; and, in the second place, that it is lawful to invoke their intercession.

The effect of this belief is thus beautifully described by a Catholic writer. "The brightness of the saints is naught else than an irradiation from the glory of Christ, and a proof of his infinite power, who out of dust and sin is able to raise up eternal spirits of light. He who, therefore, revereth the Saints, glorifieth Christ, from whose power they spring and whose true divinity they attest."

"They are permanent models of Christ's life, in whom the Saviour has stamped his own image, in whom he, in a thousand ways, reflects himself, and in whom, exhibiting to us patterns for all the relations of life, he brings vividly before our view the whole compass of virtues rendered possible through him." *

The circle of our relations with the unseen world is not completed with the Angels and Saints. There exists a communion between the living and the dead.

The Catholic Church teaches that there is a place where the souls of the just are detained till they are purified, in order to be admitted into their

* Moehler, Symb.

eternal country, "into which nothing defiled entereth." "For not all believers, who have been members of this terrestrial church, and have departed from it, with signs of the covenant of love, enter immediately, on their passage to eternity, into those relations of bliss, destined, from the beginning, for those who love God in Christ. According as they quit this earthly life, either slightly touched by divine love, or by it effectually freed from the stain of sin, they pass into different forms of a new existence. The former are transferred to a state suited to the still defective, moral, and religious life of their souls, and which is destined to bring them to perfection ; the latter to a state of happiness, corresponding to their consummate sanctification. The first, like the members of the Church terrestrial, are with reason included in the suffering Church ; for their peculiar existence must be considered as one of suffering, for they are not only still passing through the fire of purification, but are also subjected to punishment, for it depended on themselves alone, by the right use of their free will, during their earthly career, to establish themselves in a perfect, intimate, and untroubled union with God." *

What is more comforting and sustaining to the heart, what more precious privilege of piety than

* Moehler Symb.

the teaching of the Church that we, who are on this side the grave, can by our prayers, by our alms-deeds and other good works, alleviate the sufferings of those beyond it? "How admirable is this intercourse between the living son and the deceased father—between the mother and daughter—between husband and wife—between life and death! What affecting considerations are suggested by this tenet of religion! My virtue, insignificant being as I am, becomes the common property of Christians; and, as I participate in the guilt of Adam, so, also, the good that I possess passes to the account of others! the prayers of your Nisus will be felt by some Euryalus beyond the grave. The rich, whose charity you describe, may well share their abundance with the poor; for the pleasure which they take in performing this simple and grateful act, will receive its reward from the Almighty in the release of their parents from the expiatory flames. What a beautiful feature in our religion, to impel the heart of man to virtue by the power of love, and to make him feel that the very coin which gives bread to an indigent fellow-being, entitles, perhaps, some rescued soul to an eternal position at the table of the Lord."*

What contrasts are presented in this chapter

* Chateaubriand.

to the intelligent Reader ! On the one hand a Religion pretending to be a purified Christianity, suppressing one of the most wonderful and deeply-rooted instincts of man's spiritual nature, by shutting out from his vision, and cutting off from his religious sympathies, his relations with the glorious spirits of Heaven and the blessed dead ! A Religion which admits the temptations and wicked influence of the devil and his fallen angels over men, while it denies the inspiring and beneficent influences of the Holy Angels and Blessed Saints of God ! A Religion which closes up the avenues of the soul for the reception of heavenly light, while it opens them to that darkness bearing with it the most fearful and diabolical agencies ! A Religion which repudiates "The Communion of Saints," and acknowledges that of evil spirits !

On the other hand, the Catholic Religion opens to our vision the realms of the invisible ; directs all our spiritual instincts heavenward ; and places us in intimate relations with the world of the good and blessed. The Angels are our constant companions, whispering to us heavenly thoughts ; the Saints are not idle spectators, but with their prayers aid us in our struggles and rejoice in our triumphs ; and the departed accompany us in our acts of piety even to the foot of God's holy altar.

Catholicity makes the invisible world more real to her faithful children than the world we live in ; the Angels and the Saints are their constant companions ; their future life is made familiar to them here, because their " conversation is in heaven."

Have you not observed, inquiring Reader, in the faces of the Saints, such as the old Catholic artists loved to picture them, something angelic, celestial, something one knows not precisely what, except that it is of heaven ? Have you not witnessed something akin to a smile awakened by the sight of an Angel beaming from the face of some devout Catholic while at devotion ? What is this ? It is the soul that has caught a glimpse of heaven, and, recovering its angelic beauty for a moment, transfigures the body. And why is this found in Catholicity alone ? It is because the Catholic Religion alone sanctions and directs man's spiritual instincts into their right channels, and presents to them the true and noblest objects of gratification.

XXXV.

Memorials.

“The love
Of mighty minds doth hallow, in the core
Of human hearts, the ruin of a wall
Where dwelt the wise and wondrous.”

BYRON.

INTIMATELY connected with the instinct of communion with angelic spirits of the blessed dead, is the feeling of veneration for the remains, the monuments, and even the localities rendered sacred by the gifted and the good, and by the heroes of humanity.

How few can be found who have not among their heart-treasures some trifle, kept sacred, either in memory of departed greatness or of human love. Scarce a family, distinguished or obscure, but has some relic of their ancestry which is transmitted as an heir-loom from generation to generation, with feelings of actual reverence. Innumerable

are the monuments raised by nations in honor of their sages, heroes, and distinguished sons. The remains of the truly great, their shrines, birth-places, dwellings, and indeed whatever was associated with them, excites indefinable sensations of enthusiasm and loving respect. "Stratford-on-Avon does not contain the remains of mere English genius—it is a place of pilgrimage to the generous and high-hearted of all countries; and their names are to be found as on the summit of the pyramids, encircling the walls of Shakspeare's house. At his grave meet the gifted of all ages, countries, and times." Are not St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey encircled with monuments consecrated to the memory of the genius, heroism, and virtue of the English people? Are not the public parks of our large cities adorned with the statues of Washington and those whom we delight to honor? And a true relic we find treasured in one of our public buildings at the seat of Government, a full suit of dress belonging to the "Father of his country," and the coat and sword of the Hero of New Orleans. What sums have not been paid for a hat of Napoleon I., or a tooth of a Nelson? And many of our own countrymen prize a snuff-box made from the wood of Mount Vernon, or a walking-stick from the frigate Constitution.

No instinct is more universal in its sympathies, more popular in its expression, more natural to man, than that of veneration for the great, good, and wise, and all associated with their memories. Religion does well in directing it to its divine destination.

But here, as elsewhere, the Protestant Reformation did its utmost to make a waste in the human heart, by destroying with blind hatred every thing calculated to sanctify and control this common sentiment.

Every one is aware, who has the slightest acquaintance of the religion of the Reformers, that it annihilated, where its sway was paramount, the crucifix and the cross, pictures of the Saviour and the Virgin and blessed Mother, and of his Apostles and his Saints, the richly-painted glass which represented them, or other pictured truths of Religion. Even the tombs of the saints and martyrs were broken open, and their consecrated relics destroyed or cast to the four winds of heaven. So ardent were they in their determination to rid Christianity of all superstition, that they were not satisfied with less than robbing God's temples of all that was beautiful or holy ; and to obliterate their pictured walls, they whitewashed them—emblematic indeed of their blank, barren, and withering creed.

Such is the response of the Reformation to our universal respect for the religious memorials of sanctified genius and holy heroism. Had there existed an abuse of these, it would have been a most laudable enterprise to undertake its correction. But such was not the spirit of the Reformation ; possessed as it were by the demon of destruction, under the mask of hatred to superstition, it aimed at demolishing the Church of Christ.

A religion professing to be Catholic would be quite the reverse, if it did not extend its benediction to all our primal instincts, giving them a divine direction. Hence it will not be difficult for us to see how Catholicity meets this particular phase of our inborn propensities. The authoritative doctrine of the Church on this point as declared by the Council of Trent is as follows :

“The holy bodies of holy martyrs and of others now living with Christ, which bodies were living members of Christ, and the temples of the Holy Ghost, and which by Him are to be raised to eternal life, and to be glorified, are to be venerated by the faithful, through which bodies many benefits are bestowed by God on men.

“Moreover that the images of Christ, of the Virgin Mother of God, and of the other saints, are to be had and retained particularly in temples, and

that due honor and veneration are to be given to them ; not that any divinity or virtue is believed to be in them on account of which they are to be worshipped, or that any thing is to be asked of them, or that trust is to be reposed in images as was of old by the Gentiles who placed their hope in idols ; but because the honor which is shown them is referred to the prototypes which these images represent ; in such wise that by the images we kiss, and before which we uncover the head and prostrate ourselves, we adore Christ, and we venerate the saints whose similitude they bear, as by the decrees of Councils, and especially of the Second Synod of Nicæa, has been defined against the opponents of images.

“ And the Bishops shall carefully teach this, that by means of the histories of the mysteries of our Redemption portrayed by paintings and other representations, the people are instructed and confirmed in the habit of remembering and continually revolving in mind the articles of faith ; as also great profit is derived from all sacred images, not only because the people are thereby admonished of the benefit and gifts bestowed upon them by Christ, but also the miracles which God has performed by means of the saints and their salutary examples, are set before the eyes of the faithful,

so that they may give God thanks for those things, may order their own lives and manners in imitation of the saints, and may be excited to adore and love God, and to cultivate piety.

“And if any abuses have crept in amongst these holy and salutary observances, the holy Synod ardently desires that they may be utterly abolished.” *

It would be difficult indeed to go astray with this clear definition. It says to man, you render homage to the wisdom of your statesmen, the bravery of your generals, and to all benefactors of humanity. You respect their tombs, you inaugurate their statues, and erect magnificent monuments to their glory ; and in this you but follow the natural impulses given to the heart by its divine Creator. Be not so unjust to His religion as to cast aside or smother any of your natural emotions upon entering the Temples dedicated solely to His worship. Nowhere has He cast out nature from His Temples. Bear then into His divine presence the noblest of His works, your own free hearts and souls, with all your manhood ; but let it act in a divine order by honoring the sacred memorials of your Saviour, His saints and martyrs, and the glorious heroes of Christian faith.

* Sess. xxv.

You look at the statue of your country's liberator with proud hearts and loving reverence ; what then should you feel with a crucifix before you, the image of Christ, the Saviour of your immortal soul ? Ah ! such grateful love and sorrow as words cannot express, and a heavenly spirit of emulation may excite you to bear with patient suffering that cross which presses with more or less weight upon every human heart. See the representations of the wonderful agonies of His martyrs—behold the glorious virtues of His saints ;—when you visit their shrines, see their pictures, or venerate their relics, exalt your sentiments to their highest level of existence ! Be ennobled and hallowed in their presence, made humbler and better ; for when men are not, it is because they have been taught to stifle their innocent impulses, or to regard them with distrust as profane and superstitious. Notwithstanding these false teachings, a better nature will at times find expression. A Protestant writer says :—

“ Have not Dying Christs taught fortitude to the virtuous sufferer ? Have not Holy Families cherished and ennobled domestic affections ? The tender genius of Christian morality, even in its most degenerate state, has made the Mother and the Child the highest objects of affectionate super-

stition. How much has that beautiful superstition, by the pencils of great artists, contributed to humanize mankind ? ” *

It is surprising that “superstition” should produce so beneficent results ; but this word came not from the writer’s heart ; it was the expression of his heartless creed imposed on him.

Another writer says that “pictures tell us on the walls the stories of sacred history for the benefit of the pious unlearned, who could not read these only when thus narrated in this universal language.” †

Our New-Yorker would limit the religious influence of the productions of genius to the pious unlearned ; he might also include the refined and cultivated, as we find their dwellings often profusely adorned with works of art. Surely their faculties and tastes have not become so refined that it is beyond the powers of genius to raise them still higher in their religious aspirations, no less than in their natural conceptions, at least in some moments.

Is not Dr. Durbin a learned man ? Now listen to his experience :—

“The Crucifixion, by Vandyke, struck me most forcibly ; I could not repress indignation,

* Sir James Mackintosh.

† Rome, as seen by a New Yorker.

sorrow, even tears, as I gazed upon the image of the crucified stooping meekly and yielding his bleeding back to the strokes of the scourge, while the blue marks of the thong-scourged verged into blackness, and the dark blood trickled from the fearful wounds.”* And on Holbein’s painting of the Passion of Christ, he says : “ I never was so affected by a picture, and, for the first time, felt that my religious feelings were improved by gazing at one.”†

We have taken the testimony of a Methodist minister and Doctor of Divinity ; let us add that of the distinguished and eloquent Unitarian, Dr. Channing :—

“ When I casted my eyes on the pictures on the walls, which placed before me the holy men of departed ages, now absorbed in devotion and lost in rapture, now enduring with meek courage and celestial hope the agonies of a painful death in defence of the truth, I was touched, I hope made better These sainted dead spoke to my heart, and I was sometimes led to feel as if an hour on Sunday spent in this communion were as useful to me as if it had been spent in a Protestant Church . . . They were to me living, venerable witnesses to Christ, to the power of religion, to the

* Observations in Europe, p. 249.

† p. 276.

grandeur of the human soul. I saw what men might suffer for the Truth, how they could rise above themselves, how real might become the ideas of God and a higher life. This inward reverence for the departed good helped me to feel myself as a member of the Church universal My own heart was a witness to a spiritual fellowship. Is it not to be desired that all our Churches should have services to teach us our union with Christ's body? Would not this break our sectarian chains, and awaken a reverence for Christ's spirit, for true goodness, under every name and form? It is not enough to feel that we are members of this or that narrow communion; Christianity is universal sympathy." *

Thus, when men cast off the prejudice of a mistaken education and the fetters of an erroneous creed, their truer nature shines forth in expression of Catholic doctrines. They begin by admiring the beauty of her worship, and end by yearning after her communion.

Yet there are many who resist this and tell us that these things are contrary to Christianity;—that Christianity is a purely spiritual worship. The Reformation was an attempt to cleanse it from superstition, with a return to its primitive simplicity.

* Visit to Europe. Works vol. v. p. 207.

There is a sense in which it may be said in truth, that Christianity is a spiritual religion, but the sense in which this idea is usually presented, and generally received, is most perniciously false. It involves the overthrow of every distinct doctrine of Christianity.

Its great mystery is the Incarnation. This is the fountain source of all its mysteries, the centre from which radiates all its doctrines, and the basis of all its worship. What, now, was the Incarnation? No less than the second person of the Godhead becoming man,—the invisible Deity becoming visible by taking the nature and form of a rational creature,—the Word made Flesh and dwelling amongst us. But our purely spiritual worshipper informs us that he needs no material aids; he communicates with the invisible Deity face to face, and worships therefore in spirit and in truth.

Away then with the idea of the Deity becoming visible! The Incarnation, God made Flesh! This is a doctrine suited only to a sensual and uncultivated people, whose minds are too gross and carnal to receive a pure spiritual Religion!

We read of the same person being baptized with water, blessing children, uttering aloud vocal prayers, washing his disciples' feet, blessing solemnly bread and wine, chanting psalms; he does all this and many other acts of outward worship.

But our votary of an exclusively spiritual Christianity and worship, would have us worship interiorly, in spirit. Well then, away with these Jewish notions of outward worship, sacraments, and such like forms. We must free Christianity from the prejudices of Judaism. God is a spirit, and those who would worship Him must come to him in spirit.

The tremendous drama of his Passion begins. He is apprehended with a kiss, bound with cords, and brought before the Roman Governor, sent to Herod with a white garment, the dress of fools, and spit upon ; condemned by Pilate to be publicly scourged, a crown of thorns is placed upon his head, a tattered purple garment is thrown around his shoulders, a reed is placed in his hands. In this heart-sickening condition he is exhibited to a populace, who cry out, Crucify him !

Now he is condemned to death, and carries a heavy cross upon his lacerated shoulder ; he walks publicly through the streets of Jerusalem, while the mob deride, and the compassionate weep ; weak with the loss of blood, more than once he falls under the weight of the Cross ; arrived at Calvary, he is stripped of his garments, his wounds were revealed, his bones might be counted !

Naked he is fastened to the Cross ; the iron

nails pierce first his right and then his left hand ; his feet alike are pierced ; the Cross is raised that the assembled world may gaze upon this spectacle of exquisite agony ; he speaks and prays aloud, and, crying out it is finished, he gives up the ghost ; a soldier approaches, and stabs him with a lance through the heart !

What now will our spiritual Christian worshipper say to all this public display of physical torture ? Christianity is of course a spiritual Religion, and does not address the senses ! Christ might have redeemed the world with a prayer in solitude to his heavenly Father ; a tear, a sigh would have sufficed. No believer in his divinity dares deny this. Why, stickler for a spiritual worship, why this display before the world, of suffering, of a cruel crucifixion, and a most fearful tragedy ? Be consistent ; tell us that Christ misunderstood his mission ; he appealed to the senses, to vulgar and uncultivated minds ; he was affected by Jewish notions, and it was left for you to give to the world a Christianity pure, perfect, spiritual ! Fall down before you cry out all hail, the true Messiah has come !

In this way, with the idea of a reformed spiritual worship, we have a Christianity without Christ, and a Religion destitute of all worship.

But Jesus Christ, as the Author of Human Nature, understood better the laws and economy of life. All the great truths He undertook to teach mankind, he made visible and palpable.

The idea of God was almost obliterated from the minds of men, and God is made flesh ; the sentiment of love and human brotherhood was nearly extinguished in men's hearts, and God so loves them as to die the most painful of deaths, the death of the Cross ; the immortality of the soul was doubted by many, and Jesus Christ rises triumphantly from the grave, and in the presence of hundreds ascends visibly up to Heaven. It was thus palpably that our Redeemer taught the great truths of His Religion.

The Church, guided by His Spirit, continues so to teach the world by outward rites, ceremonies, signs, pictures, and by embodying divine truths in such forms as to be immediately recognized and understood by every degree of capacity and by all classes of men.

XXXVI.

Conclusion.

"The world is awakening to the idea of union."—EMERSON.

THE aspirations of Reason so eminently distinguish man in his superiority to the animal creation, that loyalty to these constitutes the highest nobility and dignity of his nature.

Philosophy for long centuries has vainly endeavored to solve the riddle of man's destiny, and answer his aspirations. Man is constrained to look elsewhere for adequate answers. This is a dictate of Reason, no less than a cry from the conscience of the whole human race.

Christianity is the only Religion that can reasonably claim the attention of all mankind. There is no rational hope, not the faintest prospect of any other satisfactory Religion. Either we must be-

come Christians, or abandon our religious natures to the agonizing alternatives of doubt, despair ; a condition which terminates in the death of the soul.

The Protestant form of Christianity in its exposition of Christian Doctrines contradicts the dictates of Reason, shocks the convictions of conscience, and is subversive of all human dignity. The more intelligent and conscientious of its adherents have awakened to this recognition, and hence the Protestant Religion has ceased to possess a real hold upon their convictions, or to retain their respect.

Skepticism, infidelity, atheism, can never satisfy our religious nature, for they are the denial of its convictions. Unitarianism, deism, pantheism, under the light and quickening influences of Christianity, are, beyond all measure, inadequate to our deep religious necessities.

The only road open for us to be Christians, consistent with Reason, with moral rectitude, and with a proper respect for ourselves, is to become Catholic. For the expositions of Christian Doctrines by the Catholic Church are consonant with the dictates of Reason, in harmony with our moral feelings, and favorable to the highest conceptions of the dignity of human nature.

Nations unaided by the powerful influences of Religion cannot realize their destinies. Our own country is becoming conscious of this truth. The question now pressing itself upon the American people is, to determine their Religion, as our fathers did the character of their political institutions. These, under the guidance of an overruling Providence, were based on Catholic principles, and Catholic views of human nature.

With the free exertion of Reason, with the natural impulses of our instincts, and with the silent influences of our noble institutions, the American people will rise in the strength of its manhood and proclaim itself Catholic.

Brothers of America ! you who look for a Religion agreeing with your intelligence, commensurate with all the wants of your nature, and which presents a destiny worthy of your highest efforts, investigate the claims of the Catholic Religion, and exercise your freedom by paying a loyal homage to its Divine Truth.

THE END.







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ASPIRATIONS OF NATURE

